SPECIAL FEATURE RECOUNTING 25 YEARS OF BREEDLOVE GUITARS WITH TOM BEDELL The UK's only dedicated acoustic monthly. Only £4.95 www.acousticmagazine.com **COVERAGE OF THE** ACOUSTIC EVENT OF THE YEAR THE UNLIKELY VIRAL STAR WHO INTRODUCED THE UKE TO THE YOUTUBE GENERATION **GETTING TO GRIPS** WITH A 'WAR ERA' GIBSON BANNER J-45 ISSUE 111 NOVEMBER 2015 UK £4.95 BLACK IS THE NEW BLACK GEAR REVIEWS: BREEDLOVE + MARTIN + PATRICK JAMES EGGLE + MANZER + FURCH + FRESHMAN

# WE DID NOT SUGGEST THIS when we talked about humidifying.

The Ortega People



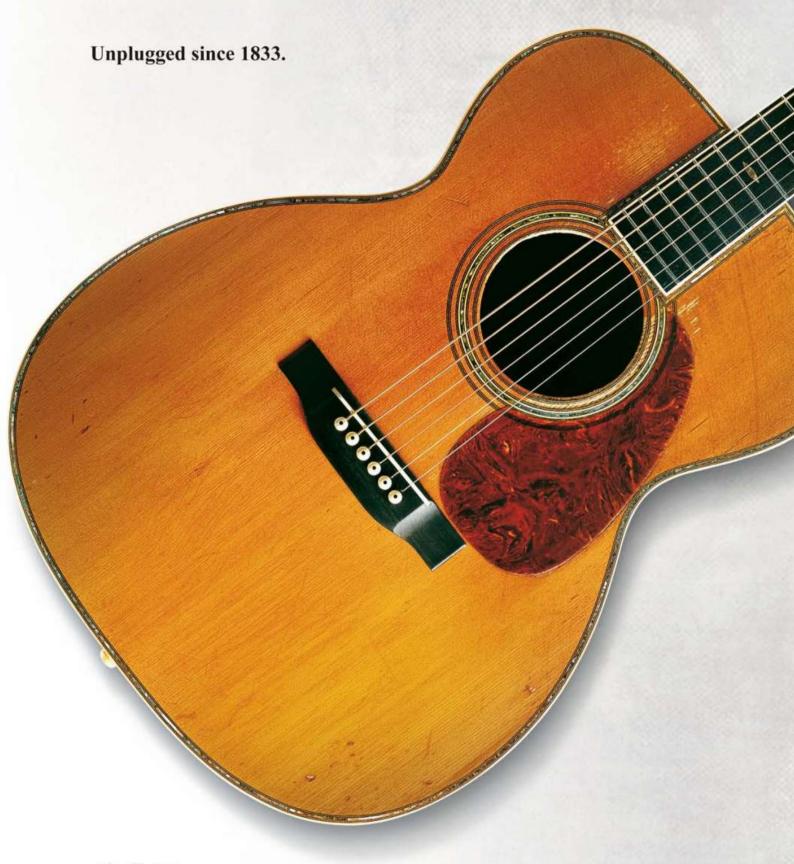
A few minutes of attention a day is all you need. With simple inexpensive little helpers you can control and adjust the humidity level of your guitar (we suggest approx. 50%). This will keep the value and playability of your stringed instrument for years to come.

www.ortegaguitars.com



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This 1939 000-42 (EC) was built during a time when everything was unplugged.

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**SUBSCRIPTION DETAILS ON PAGE 82** 





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www.youtube.com/acousticmagazine1

## THE ROOT NOTE

ot on the heels of his new album, Travels, our front cover artist this issue is the ukulele master, Jake Shimabukuro. In talking with Jake for the feature it became evident that here was a man who lived and breathed music and playing. The fingerstyle-pyrotechnics that stun fans wherever he plays are the result of having begun playing at the tender age of three. It's interesting that Jake's only real memory from his pre-school days was the day his mother agreed to let him have a gentle strum of her beloved ukulele. That single strum of the open strings is a memory that stays with him to this day - and not just the physical act, but of the sound produced too. It was arguably the single most pivotal day in Jake's life - that and perhaps the day someone, without his permission, uploaded a video of him playing 'While My Guitar Gently Weeps' in New York's Central Park which went on to be viewed over 14 million

Perhaps, like me, you too have early memories of playing an acoustic guitar. Or maybe you remember the first time you saw someone play. Either experience likely to have led to the interest in, or love for, the acoustic guitar or acoustic music you feel today. No doubt it's why you're reading this magazine today. Sadly, the daily grind of earning a living, family and the other demands life places upon us mean we don't get to play as often as we'd like. But one thing that Mr Shimabukuro reminds us of is the affinity we feel for acoustic music and instruments, and that's arguably one of the things that makes the aforementioned responsibilities all worthwhile. Perhaps the message is a reminder to make time enjoying our prized acoustics. It's my experience that waiting for the time doesn't work, hence the use of the word 'make'. We are unlike to reach the motor skills and musicality of players like Jake Shimabukuro, but, one thing's for sure, any

times and counting!



amount of time invested in our instruments pays dividends, whether that be an improved standard of playing, enjoyment from the music played, or simply some welcome respite from the boring stuff.



#### www.acousticmagazine.com

Issue 111 November 2015

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# ACOUSTIC Presents...

# 13 TRACKS OF THE MONTH'S BEST NEW ACOUSTIC MUSIC

# VOLUME 8





#### ALEX ROBERTS COLD BLOWS THE WIND

The traditions of the troubadour and bard resonate through Alex Roberts' craft. With their

roots in the songs and settings of European folk and blues music, Alex's songs traverse the branches between them. They are the fruition of a continuing exploration of traditional and contemporary folk culture, and an off-grid lifestyle. They ride on the back of his highly acclaimed finger-style guitar and bouzouki, and award winning lap-slide playing. Alex is an artist who represents the finest aspects of the songwriter's craft. This artistry is perfectly captured on his latest album: *The Daemon & The Eidolon*.

- www.alexrobertsmusic.com
- www.facebook.com/Alex-Roberts-30239841946



#### JACQUES STOTZEM TATTOO'D LADY

In the acoustic guitar world today, Jacques Stotzem is one of the

fingerstyle guitarists with the most diversified style. Born in 1959 in Verviers, the Belgian guitarist has recorded 13 CDs and is high up on the list for fans of the acoustic guitar. Readers of the influential German acoustic guitar magazine *Akustik Gitarre* have likened Stotzem to artists such as Leo Kottke, Paco De Lucia, Neil Young and Keb' Mo'.

- www.stotzem.com
- www.facebook.com/JStotzem
- www.youtube.com/JStotzem



#### FOLLY & THE HUNTER AWAKE

Folly & The Hunter are a Canadian four-piece crafting atmospheric folk-pop. Their name

originates from the subject mater of their songs: the absurdity and foolishness of searching for elusive satisfaction and happiness in the wrong places.

'Awake' is taken from their forthcoming 2016 album and blends cinematic swells and beautiful harmonies with an enthralling simplicity. Produced by Howie Beck (Feist), 'Awake' was written while the band toured North America supporting fellow Montreal act Half Moon Run

- www.follvandthehunter.com
- www.facebook.com/Follyandthehunter
- www.twitter.com/FollyHunter



### THE EAST POINTERS SECRET VICTORY

Secret Victory is the new album from PEI, Canada's the East

Pointers. The East Pointers (Tim Chaisson – fiddle, Koady Chaisson – banjo, and Jake Charron – guitar) will be touring the UK in November 2015 and February 2016. With Secret Victory, The East Pointers unwrap new possibilities in a musical style that dates back centuries yet is still relevant on multiple, divergent continents. Almost without even trying, the trio makes original traditional music seem ridiculously hip. Also the most fun thing on the planet to dance (and raise a pint) to.

- www.eastpointers.ca
- www.facebook.com/eastPointersMusic
- www.twitter.com/theeastpointers



#### DANNI NICHOLLS **BFTWFFN** FOREVER AND

The UK's Danni Nicholls is a classic songwriter. Rooted

**GOODBYE** 

in Americana, she "slips effortlessly between smoky soul, folk-pop and heart-wrenching altcountry" (Q magazine) all in a rich voice which has been described as 'one in a million' (Maverick Music Magazine). Her second full-length album Mockingbird Lane - recorded in Nashville with some of America's finest musicians - is due for release 23 October.

- www.danninicholls.com
- www.facebook.com/danninichollsmusic
- www.twitter.com/danninicholls



#### KATY CARR **BOMBA**

Polonia, Katy Carr's fifth album, is inspired by an under-developed area of Western historical research:

World War II's Eastern Front and the mighty military force of the freedom fighters of Poland. Carr's songs on *Polonia* explore those very people who during World War II fought not only for an independent Poland but also for the freedom of the west, especially Great Britain. Katy Carr's music and songs on Polonia open us up to a world that largely has been forgotten and she is definitively a leader for the renaissance in Poland.

- www.katvcarr.com
- www.facebook.com/katycarrmusic



#### JAMIE LAWSON ALL IS BEAUTY

Jamie Lawson is the first signing on Ed Sheeran's Gingerbread Men record label. Propelled by the

success of hit single 'Wasn't Expecting That', Jamie is rapidly ascending the acoustic ranks. He has opened up on Ed's European sojourn, supported One Direction, and toured Australia playing to 175,000 people over 17 dates. If you're looking for comparisons, think early, Moondanceera Van Morrison meeting the poppy accessibility of James Morrison, with perhaps a tip of the hat to Damien Rice and Ray LaMontagne.

- www.facebook.com/jamielawsonmusic
- www.twitter.com/jamielawsonuk
- http://jamielawsonmusic.tumblr.com



#### **ELEANOR** MCEVOY

#### LOVE MUST BE TOUGH

Throughout her career, McEvov has earned accolades and picked

up various awards - not just for her work but also for the super high-end audio approach she has taken on various albums. Her music has evolved and developed over her career and this album is a confident statement. This is Eleanor's homage to Americana, including songs written by Eleanor with Johnny Rivers, Rodney Crowell, Brad Parker and Dave Rotheray, and featuring songs by Terry Allen, Priscilla Bowman and the Rolling Stones and Sly Stone.

- www.eleanormcevoy.com
- www.twitter.com/eleanormcevoy
- www.facebook.com/eleanormcevoy



#### PAUL MEEHAN SHEILA ON THE **SEGWAY**

For some time, Paul Meehan has been considered a musician's

musician. Supporting others with his driving yet understated, inventive and pulsing playing, creating a platform for Ireland's leading lights to shine. Finally, he has emerged from the shadows to release his eagerly awaited debut album The Lower Road. This immensely talented multi-instrumentalist takes centre stage, playing banjo and guitar on this beautifully crafted, fresh and energetic, yet solidly traditional album.

www.facebook.com/paulmeehanmusic



#### MARK **HARRISON** YOUR SECOND LINE

Mark Harrison is establishing a growing reputation

for making a unique kind of all-original music, based on the style of the early blues and folk/ blues artists, with a modern twist. His highly individual music, with its memorable tunes, striking lyrics and strong and compelling rhythms, has been going down very well with audiences of all kinds.

- www.markharrisonrootsmusic.com
- www.facebook.com/markharrisonmusic
- www.voutube.com/user/MarkAHarrison1
- www.twitter.com/mharrisonmusic



#### COATES HOLD MY TONGUE

Although Coates may be recognised as a fully fledged band due to the live sound and

full scale studio productions, singer/songwriter Oliver Coates is responsible for the song craft and group's overall direction. With a mainstay line-up of producer Toby Pilcher on drums and mix engineer Alex Hatcher on bass, these incredibly creative musicians help encapsulate the sound of Coates. After touring the UK, dedicated early 2015 to recording their debut EP - Volume.1.

- www.coatesofficial.com
- www.facebook.com/coatesofficial
- www.twitter.com/coatesofficial
- www.youtube.com/coatesofficial



#### VÄRLDENS BAND LEVA // NA BALOU // JIVAA

Fourteen musicians, seven countries, three continents, one band. Världens Band performs

a mix of folk and roots music from their native countries in a collision of cultures and a style that they have self-branded 'Transglobal Roots Fusion'. Swedish melodies meet Scottish reels, English guitar accompanies Indian classical song, Galician pipes play Balkan melodies and the Senegalese kora blends with Mediterranean rhythms. The result is a unique and exciting blend of culture, personality and style.

- www.varldensband.com
- www.facebook.com/varldensband
- www.soundcloud.com/varidens-band
- www.twitter.com/varldensband



#### **WOODY PINES** THIS TRAIN **ROLLS BY**

This is gonzo folk music, the kind of raise-the-rafters, boot-shakin' jump

blues that used to be banging out of juke joints all over the South in the late 1940s, but now it's burning into the earholes of a younger generation of Nashville kids, all looking for music with deep roots and something to hang on to. This is serious roots music that's as much a way of life as an aesthetic choice. This music isn't for dabblers; you gotta feel it in your bones.

- www.woodypines.com
- www.facebook.com/woodypines
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- www.instagram.com/woodypines

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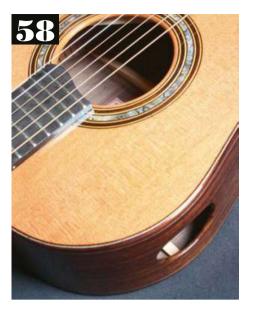


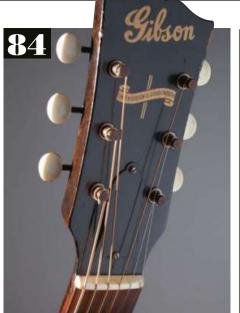




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### ACOUSTIC NIDWS DIDSK

FOR THE LATEST NEWS VISIT WWW.ACOUSTICMAGAZINE.COM

# NEW BLUETOOTH DEVICE TURNS GUITAR INTO

**SPEAKER** 

Let us introduce you to Acoustajam, a new Bluetooth device that can be installed in the soundhole of a guitar and turns your instrument into a portable speaker. A combination of the main device – which affixes via a self-adhesive strip – and the included sound pads attached to the underside of the guitar's soundboard pick up transmitted data from your media device and use the guitar's sound chamber to amplify the music.

According to the manufacturer, the Acoustajam 'creates a single source audio, allowing acoustic guitarists to play along with their favourite tracks, or separate acoustic, bass or electric guitar accompaniment.

Performing with additional players also loaded with Acoustajam, opens up a world



of possibilities live and in the studio. When it's time to chill, simply use the guitar as a portable speaker.'

It features an on/off control, status LED,

pairing control and a micro USB connection to the charge the on-board li-ion battery. It will retail at £69.99 and more info can be found at **www.acoustajam.com**.

#### PRS UNVEILS EUROPE EXCLUSIVE SE A10ES

We've received word from PRS Guitars Europe that a limited edition run of the allmahogany PRS SE A10E will be available exclusively in Europe.

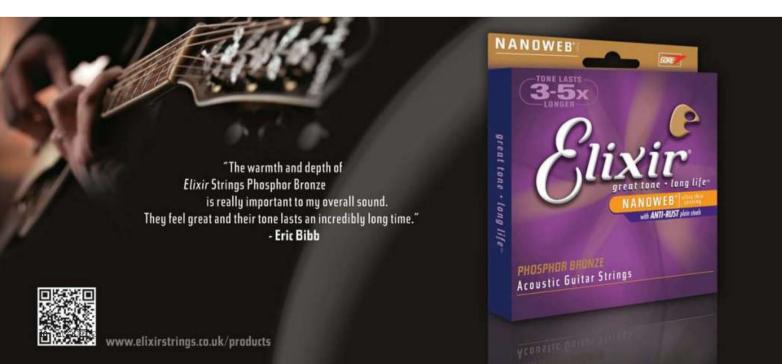
The first all-mahogany guitar in the SE Angelus line up, the SE A10E features a controlled attack, warm, woody tone and focussed, punchy midrange, made possible

thanks to PRS's X-brace/classical hybrid bracing design.

In addition to the mahogany top, back, sides and neck, the SE A10E sports a rosewood fretboard, bone nut and saddle, PRS-designed tuners and PRS's trademark bird inlays. Finally, the SE A10E is fitted with undersaddle electronics that are

accessible via the soundhole with both tone and volume controls.

The limited edition run encompasses four stunning colours – Antique White, Cherry Sunburst, Tobacco Sunburst and Vintage Cherry. A single batch of the limited edition colours will be produced and will ship with an RRP of £499.



### FENDER ADDS AMP OPTIONS FOR ACOUSTIC PLAYERS

Fender has released the 'gamechanging' Acoustic Pro (RRP £709) and Acoustic SFX amps. The former is billed as a true 'audiophile amp' that delivers superior live sound. The 200-watt amp has two universal channels designed for guitars or microphones, each with its own 1/4" – XLR combo jack and hall reverb. It also features an integrated handle and tilt-back kickstand, full-sounding 12" neodymium woofer, high performance tweeter with crossover network, feedback-reducing phase switches, balanced line output, effects loop and Aux In jack.

The SFX amp (RRP £589) – aimed at the 'acoustic player looking for a grab-and-go rig for small venues' – features Fender's sound field expansion technology that 'imparts dynamic life to the onboard hall reverb, echo, delay, chorus and Vibratone effects – moving them around the listening area for an amazingly multi-dimensional sound.' There's also feedback-reducing phase switches, line output, two universal channels designed for use with guitars or microphones, and a footswitch jack for the optional two-button effect bypass footswitch.

Read more at www.fender.com.





#### PIERRE BENSUSAN HITS THE UK

The supremely talented Pierre Bensusanis back in the UK in October performing shows in Liverpool, Lincoln, Ashton-Under-Lyne, London and Brighton. The UK leg of his European tour will see him perform dates from Wednesday 21 to Wednesday 28 October. §Make sure you pick up tickets while you still can. For tickets go to: www.pierrebensusan.com/Tour.

Acoustic has also learned that Pierre has joined the 'Truefire' family. In September 2015, he released a brand new series of 61 video lessons called 'Pierre Bensusan's Guitar Intuite'. You can find out more at www.pierrebensusan.com/store.

21 Oct 2015

Liverpool Philharmonic Hall, Liverpool, UK Doors Open: 19:30 Ticket Price: £13

22 Oct 2015

The Terry O'Toole Theatre, Lincoln, UK Doors Open: 19:00 Ticket Price: £12

23 Oct 2015

Broadoak Hotel, Ashton-Under-Lyne, UK Doors Open: 19:30 Ticket Price: £12 25-27 Oct 2015

The Half Moon, Putney, London, UK Doors Open: 19:00 Ticket Price: £10

28 Oct 2015

Komedia, Brighton, UK Doors Open: 20:00 Ticket Price: £12.50

#### ILFRACOMBE FESTIVAL ANNOUNCES STELLAR LINE-UP

Ilfracombe Folk, Roots & World Music Festival will take place at the John Fowler Holiday Park on 20-22 November. Headlining the festival's three nights are Fairport Convention, Oysters3 and Barbara Dickson, with 17 other quality acts slated to play across the long weekend.

- Friday: Oysters3 Charlie Worsham Cross harbour Josienne Clarke & Ben Walker Lotte Mullan Lindae Em
- Saturday: Barbara Dickson & Nick Holland Remembering August Liv Austen Dexeter Lucy May Delta Ladies Ellie Dibben Mark Harrison
- Sunday: Fairport Convention Julie Felix Kathryn Roberts & Sean Lakeman Coco and the Butterfields Beth Porter Woof and Wilde

To book tickets and find out more information, call 01472 349 222 or go online at www.ilfracombefolkfestival.co.uk.

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### CAnd the winner is...



's been a busy time here at Acoustic HQ. with highly desirable guitars being given out to competition winners left, right and centre. In our summer issue, as part of our celebration of the Martin D-35's 50th anniversary, we asked what year the guitar was introduced. The answer was, of course, 1965. The winner of a brand new D-35, worth £2,000, was Mr Keith Hill (above, left) from Hayle, Cornwall. Mr Hill was presented with his prize at Martin guitar dealer, Mansons Guitar Shop, Exeter. "I used to have a music shop in West Cornwall



for many years selling some fine acoustics," said Keith, "one of the many Martin guitars I enjoyed the most was the D-35. I always intended to treat myself one day - and here it is!"

In Acoustic 102 a Wee Lowden worth £2,775 was up for grabs. The winner of this guitar was John Caffell (above, centre) from Cheshunt, Herfordshire. Mr Caffell was at the London Acoustic Show in 2014 where George Lowden held a masterclass on guitar building and discussed the new Wee Lowden guitar. "I thought then," said John, "that would be a lovely guitar to



own, and now I do!" We united him with his new guitar at this year's London Acoustic Show.

Acoustic's centenary issue saw the opportunity to win a Tommy Emmanuel signature Maton worth £2,000. The winner of the EBG808TE was Rory Evans (above. right). "I couldn't be happier," Rory told Acoustic when collecting his prize at the recent London Acoustic Show.

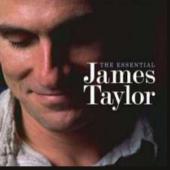
Many congratulations to all our recent winners and, for those that missed out this time, look out for more competitions soon!

### USIIC RECOMMENT

ESSENTIAL NEW RELEASES NO SELF-RESPECTING LOVER OF ACOUSTIC GUITARS SHOULD BE WITHOUT...









#### JACK SAVORETTI WRITTEN IN SCARS

Following his recent performance on Glastonbury's Acoustic Stage, Jack Savoretti has announced a major UK tour this autumn in further support of his new album Written In Scars. The new album has achieved UK sales in excess of 50,000 and sees Savoretti establish himself as one of this country's finest singer-songwriters. The three singles taken from the album have all bee playlisted at Radio 2, with the title track going straight onto the A list. Look out for a feature interview with Jack in next month's issue of Acoustic. WWW.JACKSAVORETTI.COM

#### **TOMMY EMMANUEL** IT'S NEVER TOO LATE

It's Never Too Late, is Emmanuel's first all-solo. all-acoustic studio release in 15 years, and further cements him as one of the leading fingerstyle guitarists on the planet. Emmanuel is one of only five guitarists in the world to be given the title of CGP (Certified Guitar Player) by Chet Atkins. In speaking about the new release, Emmanuel said, "It has to make me feel something. I'm still playing for myself, because I figure if I please me, then I'm pretty sure gonna please you. That's not an arrogant statement, it's just quality control."

WWW.TOMMYEMMANUEL.COM

#### JAMES TAYLOR THE ESSENTIAL JAMES TAYLOR

Since signing with the Beatles' Apple Records in 1969, James Taylor has amassed records sales of more than 100 million. The Essential James Taylor is a careerspanning collection of his hits, which will be available as a single CD, and also an alternatively programmed two-CD deluxe edition. The one disc version of 18 tracks spans Taylor's studio and live recordings from 1970 to 2002. The double disc collection of 37-tracks also spans music from 1970 to 2001.

WWW.JAMESTAYLOR.COM

#### SIMPSON, CUTTING, KERR. MURMURS

It's not often three virtuoso musicians come together to form an exciting new band, but Martin Simpson (guitar and five-string banjo, Andy Cutting (diatonic accordions) and Nancy Kerr (fiddle and viola) have. Murmurs is a collection of songs that boasts musicians at the top of their game, displaying empathy and feel for each other's playing and collective understanding of the music. Recorded with award-winning producer Andy Bell, reworkings of traditional songs sit alongside original work. For anyone new to the musicians' work, Murmurs serves as a perfect introduction.



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Linda Manzer.

"TAMCO has one of the best collections of handmade guitars on the planet". Ervin Somogyi.

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Grit Laskin.

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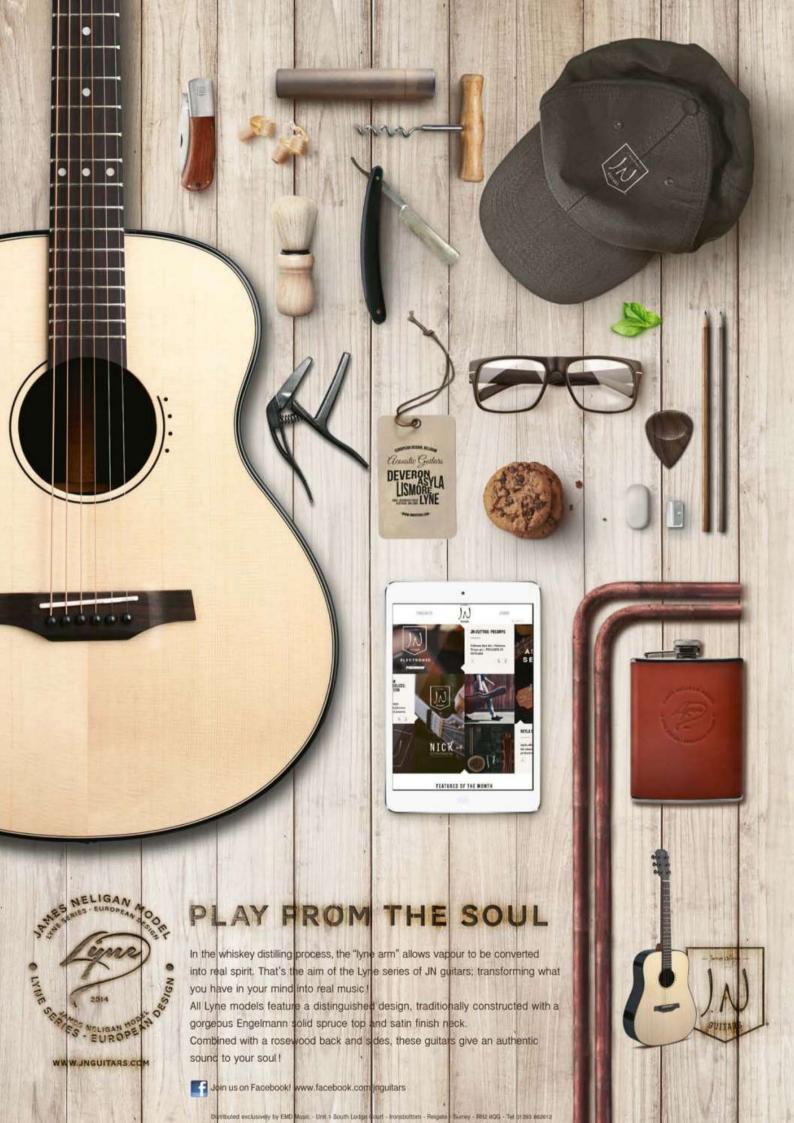
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#### MUSIC TEACHERS UNITE TO FORM CAREER-BOOSTING CO-OPERATIVES...

rastic cuts to local authority budgets have seen music services across the country cut. In these trying times, music teachers all over the UK are taking power back thanks to the resurgent co-operative movement. So how might a cooperative boost your teaching career?

#### WHAT IS A CO-OPERATIVE?

A co-op is a business that exists to serve its members. Each member has an equal say in what the co-operative does and how it does it. It's democratically owned and controlled; if you are a member, you can be master of your own destiny.

There are different models for co-operatives. One example you might be familiar with is the worker co-operative, owned and controlled by their employees. Another is the consumer co-operative, owned by their customers for the purpose of purchasing goods and services.

Music teacher co-operatives, like those in Newcastle, Swindon and Milton Keynes, are consortia co-operatives. So they provide services to an association of self-employed traders, freelancers or small independent businesses like music teachers, who would then also own and control the company. Their priority is to provide music teaching that customers want, in an affordable way. How? They get to decide that for themselves.

#### **CO-OPS HAVE THEIR ADVANTAGES**

Co-operatives are democratic. A music teacher co-operative is owned and controlled by its teacher members. That has other benefits too: encouraging personal responsibility, entrepreneurship and innovation.

They can be cost effective. How much parents and schools pay depends on the cost of the teachers' fee plus a service charge based on what the co-operative needs to run. There's nothing else taken off the top, so you get the money you earn, and if there's a problem, fees can be quickly adjusted. Overheads are low, and financial decisions are accountable to teacher members.

And co-ops are free from political interference. In fact, many music teacher co-operatives have often formed to plug the gap created by a political decision. For example, Swindon Music Cooperative was formed in 1998 after the councils decided to disband the local music service.

As with all things, there are disadvantages too. Not least, a co-operative does not guarantee work, especially if you teach a niche instrument. As a teacher you want to be aware and committed before taking the plunge.

#### **WE CAN HELP**

Fifteen million people are involved in over 6,000 registered co-operatives in the UK, contributing £37 billion a year to the UK economy according to a Co-operatives UK study.

If you'd like to join them, 'Altogether Now: a guide to forming music teacher co-operatives' is a good place to start and available via theMU.org/ AltogetherNow.

To find out if there's a local co-operative you could get involved in, a co-operative starter pack, or advice on any other aspect of your career, get in touch with your MU Regional Office via theMU.org/contact.

For more information, visit theMU.org.





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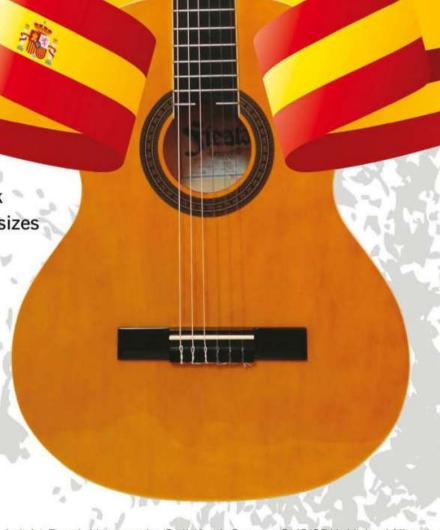
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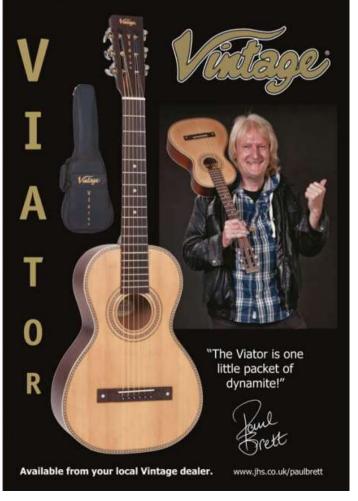
All three are experienced mandolinists and frets players.











In association with Acoustic magazine, the London Acoustic Show took place at London's Olympia on 12-13 September. Rebranded and expanded to include a wider range of acoustic instruments, West London pulsated to the beat of new gear and live performances...

**WORDS:** ANDY HUGHES **IMAGES:** RICHARD ECCLESTONE



s the British summer winds its way into early autumn, there's not a lot to look forward to. Except, that is, the most eagerly anticipated gathering in the acoustic world: the London Acoustic Show. Once again, the weekend more than lived up to expectations.

Shows like this are similar to festivals – they take a good long time to bed in and thrive, but once they reach their best, they are there to stay, an automatic diary entry for people who play acoustic guitars, or like to watch other people play them, or who come along just to see what the companies are showing off in this superb arena of craftsmanship and creativity.

The format remains unchanged, because it works very well. On arrival, you hear music coming from the Acoustic Café. This is an area by the food and drink concession given over to up-and-coming musicians who are invited to

play a short set for the visitors enjoying a coffee and a sandwich during the day. It's a chance to have a listen to some of the players who could well be moving through to the main stage in years to come. Time and space do not permit an individual review of performances over the weekend, but the sheer variety of musical styles and sounds was matched only by the consistency of the levels of talent and musicianship.

However, as always, the main draw of the event is the vast number of instruments and peripherals set out to be looked at, talked about, and tried out by interested visitors.

Buying an instrument is not something to be taken lightly. If you are a complete beginner, an experienced player or a professional musician, there is going to be something on view here to tempt you. The wonderful atmosphere here means that you can take your time and chat to experienced dealers and luthiers – a lot of

exhibition stand personnel are the people who have made the guitars you are looking at, so who better to chat with you about what you actually need? A conversation with an expert can guide you away from a rash purchase that is not appropriate, and towards something that is suited to you as an individual player. That sort of advice is priceless...

The feeling of unhurried browsing is a joy to experience, with so many stands set out that it can easily take the two days of the weekend to cover them properly. Yet there's no rush: a number of the exhibitors showcase their latest designs and models, so it's a chance to have a look at the real cutting edge of acoustic instrument design and manufacture.

And as if that's not enough, the London Acoustic Show lays on a series of intimate concerts on the main stage, performed by some of the greatest talents in the acoustic world.



#### WHAT THE EXHIBITORS SAID

#### STAGEWORKS GEAR COMPANY

"The footfall this year was more varied, providing a good mix of customers due to the excellent selection of master classes and live performances."

### BARNES & MULLINS (FAITH GUITARS)

"LAS acts as a good gauge as to how you are communicating your message nationally, plus people are not backward about telling you what they think of your products."

#### TAYLOR GUITARS

"We enjoy the high level of interaction with both experienced guitarists and also the introduction of our brand to new players that the show provides."

#### EASTMAN MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

"The weekend was wonderful, great people and atmosphere. What we like best about this event is the fact that it is a specialised audience that comes - the crowd is really interested and often knowledgeable."



#### DAY ONE

The first musician to play on Saturday morning was *Luca Stricagnoli*, a young Italian player who set the day's bar particularly high with his display of technical skills, opening up the guitar in really quite an innovative way. He sent arpeggios flying around the room from each hand individually – a dazzling example of the increasingly diverse ways that players are now finding to express themselves. Those who watched Luca play will be eagerly awaiting his next projects.

The masterclass room complements the main stage, where musicians and other guests offer some background into how they write and play. The masterclasses take place away from the bustle of the main exhibition arena, and offer a chance to ask questions in a more informal setting.

First to step onto the masterclass stage was *Preston Reed*, who remains at the forefront of the tapping style of acoustic playing, and was keen to answer questions about his technique. His class was attended by many of the artists of the show, who were quick to pay homage to one of the leading lights in acoustic

interviews later in the day.

The London Acoustic

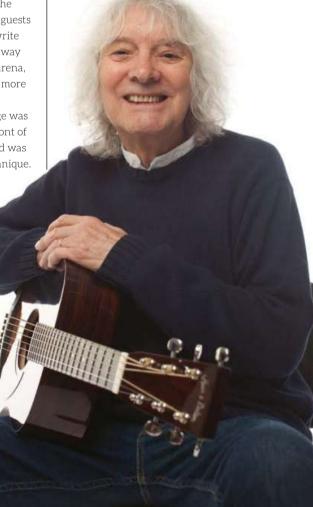
Show prides itself on the diversity of its live shows, and the next show was about as different from Luca's as is possible

- Finland's Steve 'N' Seagulls.

playing during their

The marriage of musical opposites – extreme heavy metal and bluegrass – may not sound feasible outside the

fevered mind of a teenage guitar geek, but here it is, brought to life fabulously with a verve that took over the room from the first song. Iron Maiden may not have conceived their concert staple 'The Trooper' for arrangement by mandolins, acoustic guitars and banjos, but the entire sound is just so much fun it's hard not to be swept along. Similarly, Led Zeppelin may not have imagined that their stomping blues-rock song 'Black Dog' interpreted by a man hammering a mandolin into submission,





#### KAI TOENJES STRINGED INSTRUMENTS

"For me it was an exciting weekend, hearing the instruments played by great players and seeing their positive reactions."

#### ZED MUSIC LIMITED (COLE CLARK)

"The weekend was great for us; Cole Clark is no longer an unknown brand in the **UK!** The best thing about the show is that it's a chance for guitar fanatics to be able to try a huge range of guitars under one roof."

#### PAUL BRETT VINTAGE GUITARS

"The weekend was great, as it always is."

#### GARDINER HOULGATE **GUITAR AUCTIONS**

"There was a great buzz, particularly when the various artists performed in the exhibitor area from the trade stands."

#### GEORGE LOWDEN GUITARS

"We had a great weekend showcasing the guitars and enjoying the music, catching up with old friends and making new ones. The best thing is putting a Lowden Guitar in someone's hands and watching what happens next!"



his foot on the stage monitor, Guitar Hero style all the while. Great fun, impressively talented musicians and a rapturous reception - a barnstorming triumph.

Time to head back to the masterclass suite to check out Acoustic columnist Leon Hunt. One of the reasons why the London Acoustic Show has dropped the 'Guitar' from its moniker is to allow for the inclusion of more instruments from the acoustic family, including the banjo, which is where Leon Hunt shines. Fans will be familiar with Leon's chatty and informal lessons on YouTube, but there is still no substitute for being in the same room as the teacher - and his encouraging style really makes you want to have a go yourself.

The word 'legend' gets bandied about in all genres, and the acoustic scene is no different. However, a musician like Albert Lee really deserves that title. Alongside work with country superstar Emmylou Harris and blues legend Eric Clapton, it is Albert's work with the Everly Brothers that has sealed his

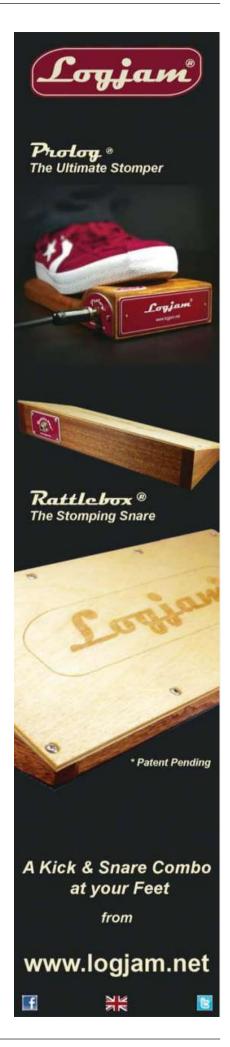
reputation, which he has carried forward with Hogan's Heroes.

Playing along to some backing tracks with slide, bass and drums, each song Albert unfurled was more sublime than the last. Recounting his history, which spans from work with skiffle master Lonnie Donegan in the late 1950s through to recent outings, Albert further cemented his reputation as a living legend.

The careful timing of the programme for the weekend begins to slot into place now, because there is ample time to stroll back to the masterclass suite for Antoine Dufour. Antoine is another international acoustic guitar star who has flown in specially to perform. Remember, these up-close-and-personal experiences are all part of the weekend ticket - the value never ceases to amaze. Antoine is a teacher as well as a performing musician, so he is used to deconstructing his awesome technical skills and showing a rapt audience the way he builds his live performance.







### PROMENADE MUSIC

"The great thing about a show like the London Acoustic Show is the chance to meet loads of people, including other luthiers and dealers. We have had a great time this weekend."

#### CLAFFEY GUITARS

"Our aim this weekend was to get our guitars seen, and our name out there and noticed by as many people as we could. We have done that very well."

#### TAKAMINE GUITARS

"We had a steady flow of customers on Saturday who were very positive about Takamine. This is the first show we have come to since distributing here, and it's all about getting our brand known."

#### STRINGS AND THINGS

"We are a distributor, so this gives us a chance to see people interacting with our merchandise, and see things, rather than relying on the internet, and they can ask questions and get some information as well."



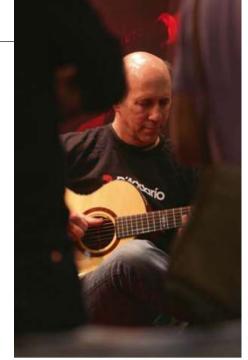
Following Antoine was yet another shift in tempo, as the unique *Jon Gomm* took to the stage. With his ethereal vocals and one-man percussion, he tapped and knocked on the body of his well-worn Lowden guitar. Think Joni Mitchell if she had been born a Lancastrian male. His version of 'Ain't Nobody' unwound with a mounting passion – this performance will have won him a good few fans.

Back in the masterclass suite, *Daniel Ho* set about deconstructing the British myth that the ukulele is only played by musical hall entertainers like George Formby. Daniel is an award-winning soundtrack composer, and has single-handedly put the 'proper' sound of the ukulele on the musical map. His easy conversation and complete enthusiasm for his instrument made him a valuable addition to the day's sessions.

To close the show on Saturday was *Doyle Dykes*, who is deservedly recognised as one of the greatest fingerstyle guitarists alive. His set was as varied in range as the sheer variety of chords and runs he managed to create with his Olson acoustic. Dykes pushed his guitar to the limit with the hymn 'How Great Thou Art', his own peerless version of 'Classical Gas' and the prototype burning progressive rock of Chicago's '25 or 6 to 4'. The Olson certainly pushed back, and it was a glorious match between the two.

#### DAY TWO

Sunday, and at ten o'clock sharp the mix of day visitors and weekend ticket holders start streaming into Olympia for another day of looking at, listening to, and playing some of the best guitars around. First, the not-too-early-for-some metal'n'bluegrass of *Steve 'N' Seagulls*. Their jaunty turnout totally disguised their fierce travelling schedule, and they were packed up and off to Heathrow







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#### FREDHOLM GUITARS

"This is my first time in England with my guitars; I only brought two because they were all I could carry on the flight. I met the guy from Collingwood Guitars at a similar show in Guttenberg, and he told me about this show. It's a way to get my guitars over here in the UK, so I have enjoyed it."

#### GREMLIN MUSIC (MACLELLAND MUSIC)

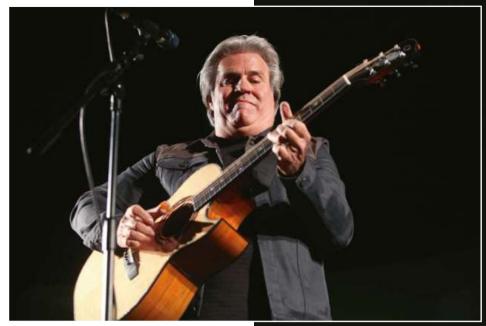
"We have had a lot of interest in our new acoustics, which we are very pleased about, and we have sold some items. We see the show as promotion, so any sales are a bonus."

#### STAND MADE

"This is our second year at the London Acoustic Show, and we have quadrupled our sales since last year. Everything has gone from strength to strength for us; we are very happy to be back."

#### **WOLFRAM SLIDES**

"I am enjoying this year. It's about being seen, and having a chat. We like to meet people and make the personal contact."



before Luca Stricagnoli had settled into his Sunday morning masterclass, which made for fascinating listening - a reward for those who got there early.

Meanwhile, on the main stage, Daniel Ho proved, as he did in his masterclass, that the ukulele is so much more than just a novelty. The gorgeous tone he evoked from it amply demonstrated why it is rapidly becoming the instrument of choice in primary schools for curious young musicians. Seeing and hearing what can be done with this underrated instrument must have given some serious thought to everyone present.

Back to the masterclass suite, it was Doyle Dykes again, who swapped his dazzling concert performance for an informal Q&A. This was a chance to watch close-up how he works that fingerstyle magic, and to hear what a genuinely humble and enthusiastic musician he is, having overcome a brain tumour and the complete loss of hearing in one ear. A fascinating speaker, and a valuable addition to the masterclass format.

Yet another musician to whom the word 'legend' can be legitimately applied was up next. Father of the greatest family of traditional English musicians in the world, Martin Carthy is as humble and understated as his guitar playing is masterful and powerful. Martin was a key figure in nurturing and reinvigorating the folk genre and a performance by him is a bit like sitting in on a history lesson - evoking how it must have been in any one of the hundreds of folk clubs Martin played in the 1960s when the folk revival was getting into its stride. Intimate and engrossing, this was traditional music delivered by a master of the genre.

The highlight of the masterclasses this weekend, however, was Jon Gomm, who drew







#### THE NORTH AMERICAN GUITAR

"The show has gone very well for us; it's always a pleasure for us to be here. We like to meet people who have seen us online, and through Acoustic magazine, and introduce ourselves and show some beautiful guitars."

#### LAG GUITARS

"We are amazed how popular the 12-string guitars have been, and that's the beauty of a show like this - it's all about holding a guitar in your hands so you think about getting one."

#### IVOR MAIRANTS MUSIC CENTRE

"I think it is important for people to be able to see a good guitar close up, and to have a conversation with people who know about it. That's the biggest advantage of a show like this."

#### ACADEMY OF CONTEMPORARY MUSIC

"We have enjoyed meeting a lot of people, the reactions and feedback have been positive. Hopefully we can come back next year."



the biggest audience of the event to his talk about making an entire percussion section to accompany the acoustic guitar, using just the guitar body, his hands, and a bottomless imagination. Those who have attended Jon's masterclasses before know what a fascinating speaker and performer he is, and as always, he gave full value.

Closing the main stage, and the weekend's live acts, was **Antoine Dufour**, whose mastery of pure tone and delicate touch kept his audience entranced for the duration of his performance – a fitting end to such a high calibre set of concerts.

As the popularity of The London Acoustic Show continues to grow, the timeline from the issue of tickets to the potential sell-out each year gets shorter, which means that is even more essential to book your tickets in good time.

#### **BUY AND SELL**

The way people choose and buy guitars is unique. No one wants to be collared by some fast-talking guy in a sharp suit pushing HP forms under your nose before you've had a chance to tune and strum the guitar you are thinking about buying. The London Acoustic Show organisers know how musicians think – which is why the way the weekend works.

There is everything you could need here – as well as bespoke instruments for the beginner or the expert, there are stands with pre-loved models to augment your main instrument, or something to start with if you are still finding your way. Capos, strings, tabs, and more plectrums than you could lose in a lifetime – and there's even a college that will teach you how to build guitars. Sign me up!



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# SHIMABUKURO

From the first strum of his mother's ukulele at the age of four, to the life-changing explosion of a YouTube video, Jake Shimabukuro's love of and affinity with the ukulele is unquestionable. Having finished his first UK tour in support of the new album **Travels**, Acoustic speaks to arguably the world's finest ukulele player about 'Stairway', that YouTube video, and why the ukulele is "the iPad of musical instruments"

#### **WORDS: STEVE HARVEY**

ot on the heels of a four-date UK tour, Jake Shimabukuro is back in his native Hawaii. When we ask him about his time in the UK he responds with typical humility, "I didn't know what to expect, it was my first tour of the UK and I didn't know if anyone was going to show up!" But show up they did, and they were treated to performances from a musician at the top of his game.

Such is his technical ability, feel and arrangement skills, Shimabukuro is fast becoming the world's leading exponent of the ukulele – an instrument growing in popularity on our own shores.

"I had such a great time, especially because it was my first time in Liverpool. I'm such a fan of the Beatles, I went on the Beatles tour and I got to touch the front door of the house George Harrison grew up in! I got to go to the Cavern and was asked to play 'While My Guitar Gently Weeps' while I was there."

Jake's tour was in part to promote his new album, *Travels*, which gently wanders from lilting, self-penned compositions to modern interpretations of beloved Hawaiian standards. His first album in four years, *Travels*, is nothing if not varied.

"The album showcases the different influences I've had over the years," he tells us. "I feel like it's my most diverse record.

It covers very traditional music through to more progressive and modern sounding pieces – especially for the ukulele."

He adds: "In part the concept was to create a way for me to be able to pay homage to a lot of my musical heroes growing up. There are a few tracks on the album chosen specifically to help me do that. One of those is the track 'Kawika'. For me, it's one of the most important tracks on the album. Growing up in Hawaii, 'Kawika' was to the ukulele what 'Stairway To Heaven' is to guitar. If you grew up in Hawaii and were serious about being a ukulele player, you had to learn the opening riff and solo to 'Kawika'. I'd always wanted to record 'Kawika' but, like 'Stairway', it's one of those sacred songs - you don't just go and record it unless you have something fresh to bring to the table. I feel, like no other, that song captures my own personal evolution as a player - coming from the very traditional but evolving into the more modern player I am now. For the last third of the song, I bring in bass, drums and keyboards - there's none of that on the original. I think that's my rock influences kicking in there! It was a lot of fun recording that particular song."

When recalling the recording of the 17-track album, Jake explains it's not a drawn-out process. "To be honest, this album didn't take too long to record," he says. "In fact, it was probably one of the quickest I've



ever recorded. I was in the recording studio for about two weeks getting everything laid down. We then spent about another week mixing and mastering. Obviously, that doesn't include the time spent writing and arranging. I generally do that a little bit at a time here and there.

"It feels like I learn a lot from every album. I don't know if I'm a better player, but during the process of recording this album I learned how to use a few more 'tools'. I feel that I have a better sense of balance, knowing where to leave space."

The diversity found on *Travels* is epitomised by the track 'Low Rider', which features vocals by Jake, as well as heavily effected, blistering solos. "I didn't want to do too much 'electric' playing, with effects and the like," explains Jake. "If you don't have that visual of someone actually holding and playing a ukulele, it's easy to assume it's an electric guitar being played."

The tale of musical influences can be a curious one. "I'm really into heavy metal music," reveals Jake, before adding, "I loved listening to anything heavy when I was a kid. On the album there's some distorted ukulele which is sort of my tribute to Iron Maiden. In the recording process I double-

"Place the greatest value on what you can already play, because that's what makes you who you are"

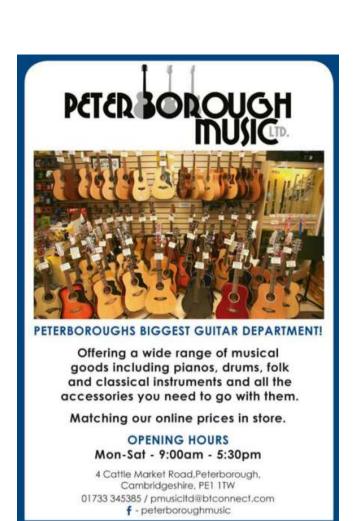
tracked the ukulele part, then layered it an octave lower and added a harmony – all to give it that big Iron Maiden sound!"

The conversation turns to Jake's formative years. His mother, an extremely capable ukulele player, would often play the ukulele at the family home.

"By the time I was three," recalls Jake, "I was wanting to play. She had a really good Kamaka ukulele – the same brand as I play today – but she didn't let me touch it! But I

was persistent and by the time I was four she sat me down and taught me a few easy chords. Looking back, that was a pivotal day in my life. What I remember most clearly about that day was the feeling of watching her take the ukulele off the shelf and put it on my lap to play. I remember when I hit the strings for the first time – that sound, just the open strings. I may have been only four but I remember that feeling and the sound to this day."

Despite his immense talent and technical ability, Jake remains refreshingly humble. In fact, the more he is asked to talk about his own abilities, the more self-effacing he becomes. "I'm definitely not a technician. Tommy Emmanuel - now he's a technician. He's got every technique in the book down, and then some. There are definitely more people out there who have a better understanding of theory and harmony, better improvisers. But, for me, the turning point was when I learned to play what I feel. When I was young I would just play and have fun. But there came a point as I matured, where I felt that connection with harmony where I could feel something and play it. It wasn't something that I worked towards, it was all very spontaneous."



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#### **INTERVIEW** JAKE SHIMABUKURO

During the course of the conversation it becomes apparent that, for Jake, music is much more than merely the production of notes on an instrument. Anyone who has had the opportunity to see him perform live, either in the flesh or on video, will attest to fact that Jake uses his ukulele to express himself. We ask if that's his incentive for playing music. "When I'm playing, writing or arranging it's a little bit of everything. mainly because I have the time. If you're not under the spotlight on stage, you have time to micro-manage everything. But when you're playing live, you just rely on what feels natural. It's also important to have the confidence to believe in what you do because the things that come naturally are easy. And if it's easy, you don't want to play it, you want to play the things that are hard. Often the hard stuff is what others are playing, but they're playing that because that's what comes natural to them!"

It's a message preached by Jake as he travels to schools and colleges around the world. In encouraging them to find their passion in music and live drug-free, Jake explains, "I always tell people in my workshops, 'You should place the greatest amount of value on what you can already play, because that's what makes you who you are. Playing what comes naturally is what people feel, it's what speaks to them because it's real and unique to you."

When discussing the benefits or otherwise of playing what comes easily, Jake is quick to add a caveat. "That said," he clarifies, "It's good to have that curiosity which drives you to experiment and learn what doesn't come naturally. That's how you grow your vocabulary and toolbox."

Many a career in music these days has been launched using the internet. Live streaming of bedroom-gigs, YouTube channels, Soundcloud et al are now considered 'standard' platforms for self-promoting aspiring performers. But back in 2005 things were very different. In the mid-noughties, the word 'viral' was only used in medical circles. In 2005, Jake Shimabukuro was an established artist in Hawaii, North America, Australia and Japan. But a chance posting on a new website was about to change all that. Jake had recorded a stunning performance of his arrangement of 'While My Guitar Gently Weeps', set in New York's Central Park.

"The video went up without my knowledge or permission," explains Jake. "It was originally recorded for a TV show. It aired on TV and that was that." But in 2006 someone took a clip of the TV show and put it up on a website popular only on college campuses: YouTube.



"I only found out about the video because a friend of mine saw it. He called me up and told me there was a video of me circulating our campus. I distinctly remember he used the word 'circulating' because there wasn't even a term for it at the time. The expression 'viral' came later on. He sent me a link and it took me through to YouTube where the video had already had over three million views. The video didn't even have my name on it, it was called, 'Asian Guy Shreds on Ukulele'!

Today the extraordinary video, complete with a corrected title to include Jake's name, has been views over 14 million times.

"That four and a half minutes of video had a massive impact on me and my life. I was blown away by the response. It single-handedly started a touring career for me. So many people from other musical genres connected with the video; from Béla Fleck to Jimmy Buffet, from Bette Midler to Ziggy Marley. I started getting phone calls and emails from bands and artists wanting me to open shows for them. The first band I went on the road with was Béla Fleck and the Flecktones – and that all came from that YouTube video."

Another video of one of Jake's arrangements is set to go a similar way;

"I remember when I hit the strings for the first time. I may have been only four but I remember that feeling and the sound to this day"

arrangements of that song and they get to that part, I always feel like it's not complete, that there's something missing. If you really analyse that part of the song, there's so much going on. So I told myself, before I start work on any other part of the song. I need to get that section right, because if I can't get that to sound how I want it to sound, then I'm not even going to start work on the rest of the song."

The list of artists with whom Jake has collaborated or performed with is growing fast. Most recently, Jake recorded with one of his long-time heroes, Tommy Emmanuel. We ask Jake who's at the top of his wish-list of artists to work with. "Well, I wouldn't be able to keep up with him," Jake responds with typical humility, "But to work with Pat Metheny would be amazing. Just to play next to him and learn from him, that would be tremendous. Calling my album Travels

> is a nod to Metheny's live album of the same name. The first time I heard that record it completely changed my perception of jazz. I remember after hearing that album it literally made me cry. The first track, 'Are You Going With Me?', Metheny doesn't come in

for three or four minutes but when he does, it's just this massive impact. It just knocked me out. The range of emotions he took me through via the album was just incredible"

"Of course, George Harrison was one of my greatest heroes. He is one artist that I wish I could have played with. I always wanted to ask him if some of his songs were inspired by the ukulele because the way his songs are arranged, the chord voicings, the melody lines, they work so perfectly on the ukulele."

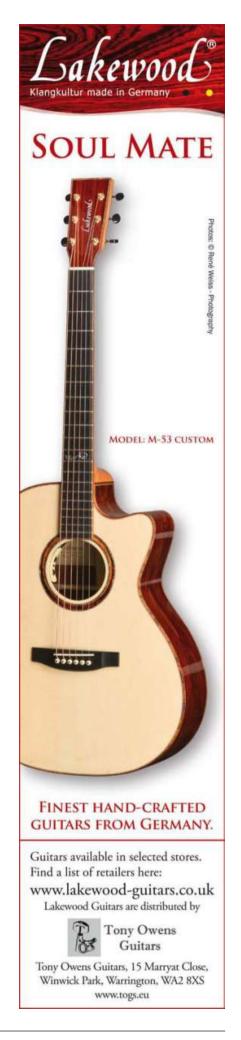
To conclude, we ask Jake to summarise why players of the acoustic guitar should consider migrating to ukulele. "The ukulele is a great instrument to get ideas from." Jake answers enthusiastically. "If you're a singersongwriter it's perfect because you can still have a good representation of harmony via chords, but it's so compact and easy to travel with. For me, the environment in which I'm in helps me to create music. Sometimes you just want to head out to the country, up a trail and the ukulele is so easy to take with you - it fits in a backpack! It's kinda like the iPad of instruments." ■

Travels is out now on Hitchhike Records. Info: www.jakeshimabukuro.com

that of him playing 'Bohemian Rhapsody' in its entirety. "That was born out of my own

curiosity," reveals Jake. "I just wanted to see if I could do it and, if I could, what it would sound like on ukulele. I don't ever want to do a song if I don't feel the ukulele itself is adding something. I've found there's always something, whether it's a chord voicing or something where I feel like I'm utilising that high fourth string, the ukulele can always bring something to the arrangement."

"When arranging 'Bohemian Rhapsody', the first thing I tackled was the line, 'Thunderbolts and lightning, very, very frightening'. When I've listened to other







# FOR GHORN STRINGSTORES STRINGSTORES STRINGSTORES STRINGSTORE STRIN

Foghorn Stringband chat to us about their unique brand of 'asskickin' red-neck' music, why they don't like being referred to as 'revivalists', and their disregard for set-lists

#### **WORDS:** TERI SACCONE **PICTURES:** MIKE MELNYK

he Foghorn Stringband make traditional, life-affirming music that demands to be seen live to be truly appreciated. As a live experience their music quite simply radiates joy. They take their various strings beyond the limit; their celestial harmonies will melt your heart, and their footstomping will make you want to dance.

Despite its long history, American string band (which is older than Bluegrass) sounds very relevant in the capable hands of this superbly tight, kinetic quartet.

The group, formed originally in Portland, Oregon, have a new album: *Devil In the Seat*, their eighth release. Comprised of two couples: Reeb Willms (vocals, guitar) and Caleb Klauder (vocals, mandolin, banjo), and Sammy Lind (vocals, fiddle and banjo) and Nadine Landry (vocals, upright bass), the foursome tour extensively throughout the world.

The nexus of the group are founders Caleb and Sammy, who were joined by various other members over the years until the current line-up formed in 2008. These four potent players channel the sounds and spirit of Appalachia with their, "ass-kickin' redneck music". The ensemble's' virtuosity is upstaged only by their fun factor. *Acoustic* chatted with them on a stop during their latest UK tour.

There is the notion amongst some in the music press that the music Foghorn Stringband plays makes them 'revivalists.' "First off, we're not familiar with that as a genre," Sammy begins. "We don't look at our music as revival music anyway because it's just traditional music to us, and it's been passed down from generation to generation.

It hasn't really died out in the first place so there's nothing to revive. We feel like keepers of the tradition – that's all. We play this music because of all music out there, it's the one we love the most and there's such a raw energy about it that we find it fun. It was passed down from field recordings as well as fiddlers who taught succeeding generations and so on how to play this."

"To me," adds Caleb, "it feels like it's a train that you jump on and it doesn't matter when you do. You just play this music because you love it. It defies time periods."

Foghorn Stringband have raided field recordings to unearth the music they cover, especially the recordings of the legendary Carter Family. "We've found a lot of gems in their catalogue," admits Reeb. "In fact, the repertoire for this kind of music is limitless. There is so much out there to play you would be astonished."

Hailing from the northern states, the members of Foghorn Stringband grew up quite far from the American South, where string band music originates.

"Music was important to all of us when we grew up, no matter where we lived", says Nadine. "Sammy played in a rock band from when he was nine or 10, and my grandma was a fiddler, and Sammy's was too, so we heard live music – especially country music from an early age. And we didn't need to be in West Virginia to understand the essence of that music. Everywhere in the world we go there is a fan base for this kind of music," Nadine continues, "so there's a real community. I started out on guitar before switching to stand-up bass."

Reeb was also immersed in country music from an early age. "I began to play in my early 20s. I started on traditional music while in college and learned the style of rhythm guitar that I play which is country and folk," she explains. "But I grew up hearing country, which my dad played and sang with my uncles."

Living, working and touring with one's partner has had its tricky side at some junctures, as Caleb jokingly intimates. "But it's way more fun to travel and make music with your partner this way," he adds, emphatically, "so everybody is happier as we're together on the road." Furthermore, the band has had a few line-up changes over the years (they were once larger and mostly male) so this incarnation is just the latest for the group and the changing personnel has not hindered their evolution.

"It's all been a very organic process. We started with five guys and kept it that way for several years. People left due to having other careers they wanted to pursue," comments Caleb. "For a while Sammy and I were the Foghorn Duo and we toured like that, we then added some friends along the way who toured with us. Then we met Nadine up in Canada and it just grew again with Reeb. We didn't plan it that way. I liked the big power sound of a full band we once had. But now with a four piece it's great because Sammy and I can switch between banjo and fiddle which is fun. It keeps more flexibility in our live shows. We bring down the power when the girls sing acapella. And then we can switch things up. So we have a lot of variety with this configuration of the group."

Many musicians choose recording studios in locations with few distractions. Accordingly,



Foghorn Stringband chose the exotic backdrop of Hawaii to record *Devil In the Seat*; however, Nadine points out that the beauty of the tropics enhanced the process rather than diverting their attentions from the music. "We all wanted to be in paradise to make this record," she says. "Plus we had a friend there so it was the right place to make this record as it was very relaxing. We had great food there too. If you follow the blog you know how important food is to us," she says with a smile. "So it worked out great for us to make music in a pretty place."

Audiences all over the world are responding to this traditional music positively – due in part to how easy it is to relate to. "I think it's because it's been around so long, and it's friendly, engaging, great to dance to," says Nadine. "

Plus," adds Reeb, "it's easy for musicians to learn the three basic chords on the guitar. You see it played and you think, 'I can learn it too.' Our music is inclusive and unplugged. It's easy to take on the road too. I hope this music will never die." There's obviously a new generation of players engaging with this genre. Reeb agrees. "There are younger people shredding

#### **GEARBOX**

REEB: "I play an old Martin 000-18."

SAMMY: "I play a German fiddle from the early 1800s, an Amati copy. I also play a few guitars: a 1937 Martin 00-18, a 1953 Martin D-18, and a 2010 Lind 00-21 (made by my dad, Mark Lind). I play a few banjos. A late 1880s A.A. Farland, a late 1880s Lyon and Healy, and a 1940s Bacon Belmont.

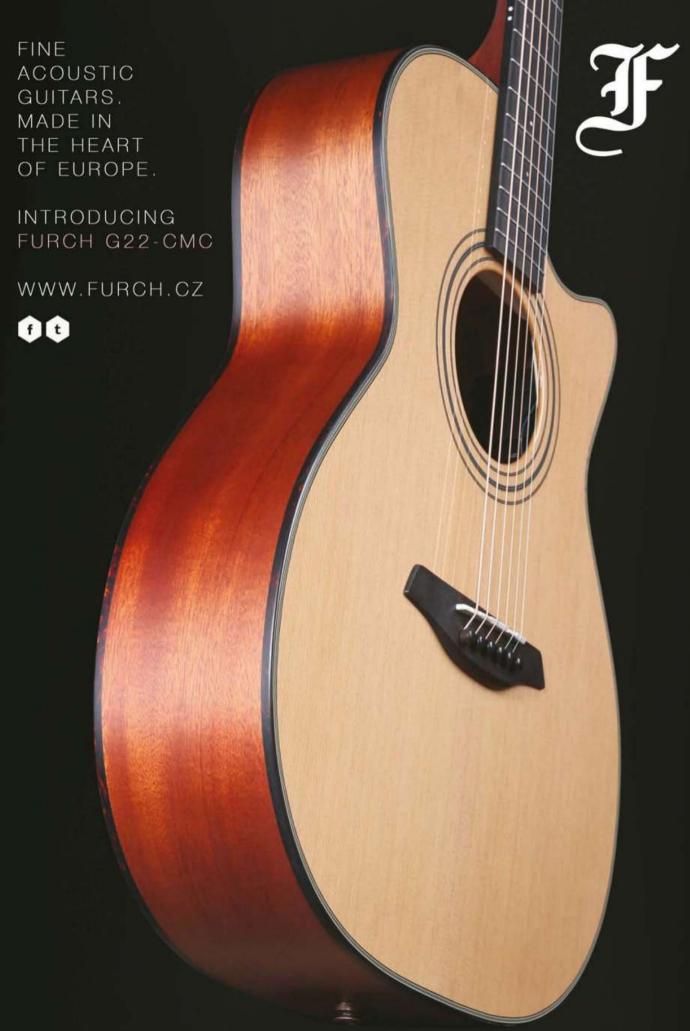
CALEB: "My mandolins are all handmade in Oregon by John Sullivan. He passed away but he was a fine builder of mandolins and fiddles. I also have an old Martin 0-17 from 1939 but I don't take it on tour with me. However, I do play it in my country band back home."

away playing this music – so we're not the young'uns on the block now."

One thing that Foghorn Stringband are not in short supply of is false modesty. The members are keenly aware that what they do – whether it be their dance, party-like live gigs, or their albums – is special. "This band is completely mesmerising live and we don't typically use a set list when we play a concert as we take requests from our audiences," says Nadine proudly. "We cater to our audiences and we live in the now to make it exciting for everyone. That's the point to a live show for us: it's a one-time experience for both us and our audience."

The band have encouraging words for musicians looking to take up fiddle, banjo and guitar. "Just play with your friends," advises Sammy, "and if you can find people to play with have fun with it. We're really good friends and it all just flows from there. It's really about that energy."

"I would say that you should listen to a lot of music, too," adds Caleb. "Do your research and hear as much as you can. Don't play at home by yourself. You need to play with people and share. We listen to so much music and there's so much to dig deep into with this music that's over 200 years old. Bottom line: enjoy yourself!"



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Phillip Henry & Hannah Martin - the first released after being named best duo at the BBC Radio 2 Folk Awards. Paul Strange checks in for a cup of tea with the pair to discuss their latest release

and harmonica players. Influenced by American blues, traditional English folk and Indian classical music, he specialises in lap-style guitar and dobro. In addition his haunting harmonica

style is blended with beatboxing, producing a

Born and raised in Devon, Hannah, 28, is a singer-songwriter who plays fiddle, viola and banjo. Her compositions, carefully woven around thoughtful lyrics, are influenced by

Things didn't spark immediately when the pair first met at an Exeter venue, around 2008. Phillip had been working in a duo with his friend Tobias Ben Jacob. He was about to leave England for Calcutta, to study Indian classical guitar with Pandit Debashish Bhattacharya.

"Toby was friendly while Phil completely ignored me!" laughs Hannah. "But we all played together at the end, so that was nice."

When Phillip returned from India, they met again - this time in a wedding band. "Toby had been asked to have this bizarre set-up," says Hannah. "He needed someone who could play tunes for maypole dancing - so that's me - and then he wanted to work with Phil.

"So we ended up at this wedding, and the organiser asked us if we could wander among the guests, playing some gentle background music. But we didn't have any material, so it was just the two of us improvising, talking to each other musically."

Phillip smiles at the memory. "We realised early on that we could both improvise with our instruments, and we both had a shared interest in traditional music." he says. "So we found some common ground."

That common ground became more fertile as Phillip and Hannah continued working with Tobias Ben Jacob in what became alt-folk outfit Roots Union. When the band split in 2010, they formed their own duo. Have things changed musically over the years?

"Increasingly we know each other's likes and dislikes," says Hannah. "We listen to more of the same music and write more collaboratively now."

"Each album's improving," says Phillip. "That's down to the writing process coming from both parties, and both being completely invested in each song. And learning how to make an album as well. We're getting better at it each time."

Does being a couple make it easier or more difficult musically?

"Easier musically, because we get on well, and we know how to be in each other's minds," says Phillip. "But being on the road together all the time can get a bit fraught."

Hannah smiles. "Maybe it's easier because we can have an argument and get the air cleared," she says. "Whereas when it's people you're trying to maintain a business relationship with, you can't just yell at them and then apologise."

Has there been additional pressure on them since their acclaimed album Mynd and winning Best Duo at the 2014 BBC Radio 2 Folk Awards?

"A little bit," says Phillip, nodding.

"People don't have the same expectation of you," says Hannah. "I felt that with the new album. It's good, but I do feel the pressure of people who've already heard Mynd. When we released it [in 2013], we had already done a couple of albums, but it was different because not that many people had cottoned on. There wasn't the same expectation in the air."

What is in the air, as Watershed sublimely unfolds, is a powerful, modern folk tale, inspired by the duo's personal experiences. Underpinned by an exquisite and assured musical collaboration, there are songs about their families, their friends, gay rights and more.

"The collection of songs that we had seemed to share that kind of subject matter, like lifechanging events or turning points," says Phillip. "So we devised a theme to pull it all together."



Hannah says that the title track is about the choices we have to make in life.

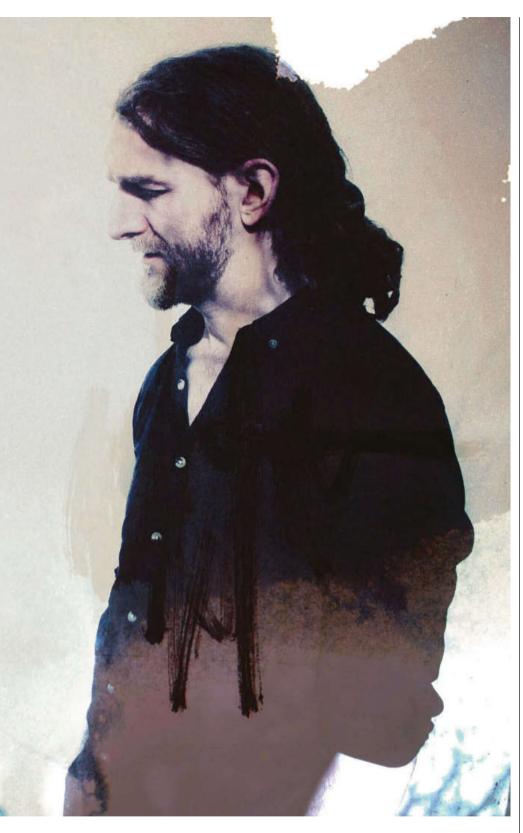
"Even though it seems that you don't have any choice and it's bleak and depressing, all of us still have a choice over the way we live our lives and who we want to be. That's something to be treasured. 'Don't stop fighting' is the message. We're only lost when people stop believing things are about to be changed.'

'Stones' is a retort to a UKIP councillor who blamed the 2014 storms and floods on the UK

government's decision to legalise gay marriage.

"It seemed ludicrous that in a modern, liberal world there was someone saying those things," says Hannah. "I've seen how it has affected people close to me, having their lives blighted by people expressing thoughtless opinions. It makes me angry when people are such arseholes."

"It's so irresponsible, isn't it?" says Phillip. "In a position of influence, to be espousing such archaic opinions."



"He was shot down for saying it, but that isn't the point," says Hannah. "It shouldn't have happened."

'Yarrow Mill' – with Phillip's only lead vocal on the album – is about how his paternal grandparents met.

"My grandad died two years ago," he says. "I wanted to do a tribute to him. He left a massive impression on everybody's lives. It's an interesting tale, of how they met in a cotton mill in Chorley, because it's still in

living memory, people working in those harsh conditions. My grandma's still alive. My dad's played it to her a couple of times. She's been quite moved by it."

'Foundling' is one the album's saddest tracks. "I wrote it for my mum," says Hannah. "I was watching *Call The Midwife* on TV. It had a storyline about young girls in East London, and their babies being taken away from them for adoption. I realised that that was my mum's background. It doesn't seem possible for that to

have been her start in life, and how harsh that was, so I wanted to write her something."

'London' is a linked track. "I was wondering about my grandmother, who obviously we never knew, so that's her side of the story," says Hannah.

The song also gives the Watershed band – Matt Downer (double bass) and James Taylor (drums) – a chance to shine. The rhythm section accompanied Phillip and Hannah on their recent UK tour, giving the duo more freedom.

"I'm usually stomping on the stomp box, doing the bass lines with my thumb, and playing lead with my fingers," says Phillip. "But I enjoyed being able to move around the stage. I was able to communicate with Hannah better, because I wasn't tied to the stomp box."

Overall the duo are pleased with Watershed.

"We captured more of the live feel than we managed to get with *Mynd*," says Phillip. "It was something we set out to do."

"I'm happy with it," says Hannah. "We wanted to give a set of songs a more contemporary feel, but not lose the roots. But there's always more to try and do musically, isn't there?"

It's time to leave. As I do, I pass the toppling towers of cardboard boxes again. "That's the new album," says Phillip. "Hopefully we'll shift a few."

I'm sure they will. ■

#### **GEARBOX**

Phillip Henry plays a McKenna dobro. Made in Cincinnati, he purchased it from Gruhn Guitars in Nashville. "I love it because it's got a woody depth." He also uses a Gold Tone dobro, giving him two tunings on stage, and an electric lap steel, bought from a retro shop in Exeter. On Watershed, he also plays a dreadnought cutaway acoustic guitar and a Weissenborn lap slide guitar, both made by Dave Oddy of Exeter. 'The Weissenborn is a Hawaiian-style guitar. I play it like a dobro, but it's got a hollow neck.' His harmonicas are by Hohner, Seydel and Suzuki.

Hannah Martin plays a Deering Goodtime banjo with a Schatten pickup, and a five-string Sonic violin, designed by Richard Roberts. "The fiddle is great for onstage, especially with the band, because the pickup is so good that I can be as loud as I need to be, which is the only problem with amplifying them." For practice and songwriting she uses a 'nice old' violin of unknown origin and a battered old English banjo, made by John Grey. "It sits around the house and looks friendly, and you can pick it up for 20 minutes and come up with something."



### BREEDLOVE 25TH ANNIVERSARY BRAZILIAN ROSEWOOD

In celebration of 25 years of building acoustic instruments, Breedlove has released a special Brazilian rosewood anniversary guitar. Robbie Gladwell examines the guitar constructed from tonewoods so rare it has its own passport

WORDS: ROBBIE GLADWELL IMAGES SUPPLIED BY: BREEDLOVE

he Breedlove story starts in the early 70s when the young artist and musician, Kim Breedlove, decided to follow a long held passion to build stringed musical instruments. With a background in art and design, Kim undertook the training necessary to build guitars, mandolins, banjos and other instruments. He eventually set himself up with the necessary tools and facilities to make his dream a reality. By 1974 he was beginning to be recognised as a builder of repute, making high quality, bespoke musical instruments.

In 1990 Kim's brother Larry and a friend by the name of Steve Henderson founded the Breedlove Guitar Co. with Kim as the figurehead. He now had the time he needed to design new models and concentrate on projects that required the skills of a master luthier, while the factory concentrated on production models.

Twenty-five years down the line, Breedlove is recognised as one of the leading makers of acoustic instruments. To celebrate this they have designed a special anniversary model made from some of the finest and rarest timbers in the world. Fifty of these guitars have been made to celebrate the anniversary and the one we have here is number 41 of 50.

The story behind the particular timbers used for these guitars is fascinating.

Breedlove describe their acquisition this way: "The Brazilian rosewood was harvested



"The design of this Breedlove has features that I consider supremely rare" in the 1950s and 60s and was carefully aged in a warehouse near Madrid, Spain. The Sitka spruce soundboards were salvaged from outside of Craig, Alaska and the timber for the neck is a rare Honduran mahogany."

To comply with laws governing the movement of rare timbers throughout the world, this limited edition of 50 has all the legal documents required to enable the guitars to travel freely. Think of these documents as being a type of passport! Apparently this is the first time Breedlove has offered a documented Brazilian rosewood instrument at this price. (You can read more about the story behind the Brazilian rosewood and this guitar in our Workshop feature on page 86.)

As luck would have it one of them has landed on our shores and I've been putting it through its paces. The design and construction of high-end Breedlove guitars is interesting. Apart from the beautiful, rare timbers used in these particular guitars, which, incidentally have been seasoned for longer than any other guitars that I'm aware of, the design has features that I consider supremely rare.

For instance, the table of the guitar is graduated in thickness, with the treble side being slightly thicker, which imparts a firmer, more rounded tone than usual. The bass side, being thinner, allows more movement and can therefore vibrate more freely, which allows for a deeper, more controlled bass than you would normally



#### **BREEDLOVE 25TH ANNIVERSARY** BRAZILIAN ROSEWOOD GUITAR

NEED TO KNOW

Manufacturer: Breedlove

Model: Brazilian 25th Anniversary Concert

RRP: £6.799

Made In: America

**Body Type:** Concert

Body Lower Bout Width: 15" - 381mm

Body Upper Bout Width: 11 1/4" - 286mm

Body Length: 20" - 508mm

Top: Solid Sitka spruce

Back/Sides: Solid Brazilian rosewood

Finish: Natural Gloss

Neck Wood: Honduran mahogany

Fretboard: Ebony

Frets: 20

Nut Width: 1 3/4" - 44.5mm

Scale length: 25 1/2" - 648mm

Tuners: Gold Gotoh 510 model 18:1 ratio

Onboard electrics: LR Baggs Anthem TRU-Mic

Case: Ameritage hardcase

Strings fitted: D'Addario 12 gauge

ACOUSTIC TEST RESULTS

Pros: Extremely well made, top notch materials, great finish quality. Fabulous tone and playability. Cons: It costs more than some family cars. **Overall:** A valuable addition to any collection.

ACOUSTIC RATING

Sound Quality: OOOOO

Build Quality: OOOOO

Value for Money: OOOOC

5 Stars: Superb, almost faultless.

4 Stars: Excellent, hard to beat.

3 Stars: Good, covers all bases well.

2 or 1 Stars: Below average, poor.

CONTACT DETAILS:

#### Rosetti

www.rosetti.co.uk www.breedlovemusic.com



expect from a concert sized instrument. Also, each table is individually graduated according to its particular stiffness and density. As this design of table is generally more flexible than most designs, Breedlove has employed a special bridge truss (BBT) to reduce the effects of string tension without restricting the tonal balance. This device is mounted to the underside of the bridge and is connected to the end block, which in turn pulls the bridge downwards, reducing the pressure on the top. This prevents the table from distorting (known as 'bellying') under string tension, without the need for the traditional heavy bracing that often stiffens the table too much.

The neck is a very comfortable C shape, which is suitable for even the smallest hand. I particularly like the narrow, medium



height fret wire Breedlove has chosen to fit, as it allows you to play chords without the disconnected feel that low frets often give or, conversely, that 'tram-line' feel that you sometimes get with taller frets. Ebony is used for the fingerboard, which is inlaid with an attractive floral design made from abalone. The ebony board is close grained and absolutely perfect, without the discolouration commonly seen in some ebony nowadays. The finish on the neck is a hand rubbed satin lacquer.

Rather than a traditional glued-in dovetail neck joint, Breedlove has opted for an easily adjustable bolt-on neck system and a single action truss rod. This system allows for a neck reset without major surgery. An extralong truss rod wrench is supplied with the guitar too, as a regular length tool wouldn't



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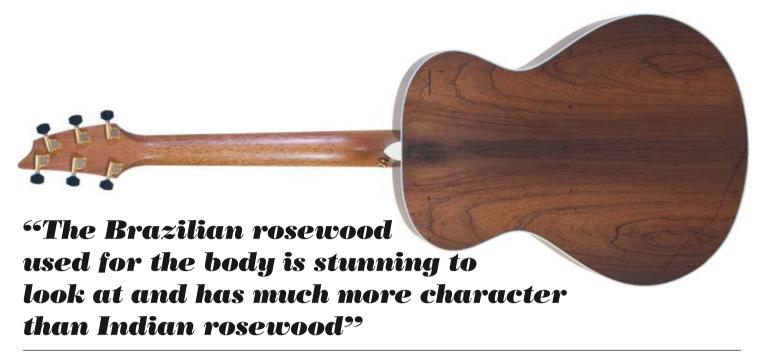
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reach due to the bolt-on neck design employed here.

The appearance is complemented by the creamy white ivoried look to the multiple layered binding used for the neck and body. It gives the guitar a real vintage vibe – especially with the classic, highly figured timbers used.

The Brazilian rosewood used for the body is stunning to look at and has much more character than Indian rosewood. The various swirls and dark straight lines – that sometimes run laterally through the wood – are uniquely typical of the Brazilian variety. I've looked inside the body with a mirror and a torch and the internal finish is excellent with no excess glue or unsanded timbers.

Inside there is a white oval shaped label with the model name and details, which



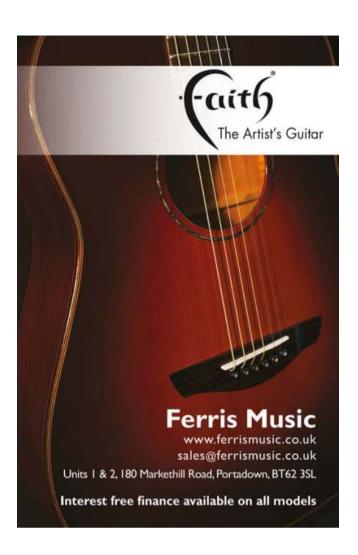
is signed by Kim Breedlove. The body is finished with multiple applications of lacquer, which is then hand rubbed to a flawless high gloss finish with no visible undulations or 'orange peel'.

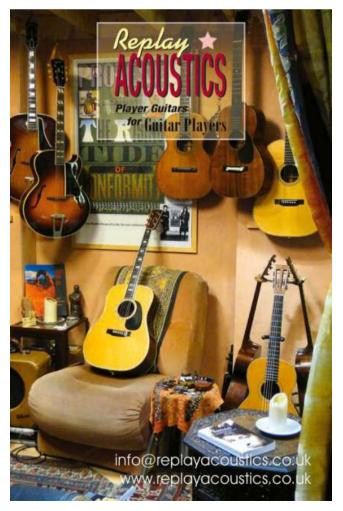
I've spent countless years demonstrating, quality controlling (for several large manufacturers), building, repairing and setting up guitars, and can honestly say that this guitar is a joy to play. The neck is correctly adjusted, the fingerboard nut is cut correctly to allow a comfortable first fret string clearance and the action height is just right – whether you're delicately fingerpicking, or simply banging out chords.

Concert bodies are not known for their big sound, but because of the unique table design used here there is a depth to the bass end that belies the body size. The tone has characteristics and overtones of certain large bodied jumbos, such as the Gibson J200 or the Guild F-150, but without the overpowering boom and volume. It also has a characterful midrange and treble that is punchy and strong, yet sweet and 'woody' – not unlike certain 000 Martin guitars.

The fitted LR Baggs TRU mic system captures the natural acoustic tone of this guitar impressively well. I tested it through a Bose L1 Mk 11 system PA and the results were highly pleasing.

All in all it's a well built, great-sounding, very responsive instrument that handles anything you can throw at it. But please don't get me wrong, I'm a very, very critical technician and player, it just so happens that guitar is exceptional all round – which is exactly as it should be at this price!







### C.F. MARTIN & CO. GPXIAE & OOXIAE

Alun Lower knocks on Martin's front door to get a look at two smart entry-level acoustics that are minimalistic on looks, but big on tone

#### WORDS: ALUN LOWER IMAGES: RICHARD ECCLESTONE

or those of us strapped for cash when it comes to instrument purchases, getting through the door of an A-list guitar owners' club is commonly known as 'the dream'. And every so often, these giants of the guitar world are kind enough to release keenerpriced points of entry to allow us mere mortals to get on board and see what all the fuss is about. In Martin's case, the X series combines a selection of cunning design decisions with classic looks to create a rather compelling package.

The problem is that sometimes when you finally get into the club, the grass isn't always greener – and you find out that all you've ended up paying more for the name on the headstock than any

tangible, real-world benefit. It works both ways, but it's often hard to predict until you get your hands on the object of your desires and find out for yourself. So while I was understandably excited about being loaned a pair of Martins for a couple of weeks, my inner sceptic was left wondering what I was truly in for.

As a bit of an overview, both of these guitars share a few traits. For starters you have the usual Sitka spruce top – which for

all intents and purposes appears to be a fine example on both instruments, with a tight and even grain. The tops are supported by hybrid X bracing underneath and fixed, sans-binding, to 'mahogany pattern' high-pressure laminate back and sides. This is a common approach in many budget guitars, but if I'm honest, at the £500-price point there are a few canny operators out there offering solid wood options. Taylor is also known for using laminates on relatively expensive instruments though, so while Martin is not alone in this approach it is still a little disappointing. On the plus side, the body features a lovely textured finish that makes everything feel much more organic and 'wooden'.

The bodies are then connected to

Martin's birch-laminate necks, again a slight compromise compared to many rival instruments available. Not only that, but the neck is also topped with a synthetic 'Richlite' material as opposed to the usual rosewood or ebony.

If you're a traditionalist,
this all starts to add
up as something of a
composite guitar and admittedly the
approach does make
me a little wary. The
bridge is predictably
also made of the same
material. One cool
feature, however, is in the











#### C.F. MARTIN & CO. GPX1AE

NEED TO KNOW

Model: GPX1AE RRP: £599

**Body Size:** Grand Performance

Made In: Mexico

**Top:** Solid Sitka spruce **Back and Sides:** Mahogany Patterned HPL

Neck: Birch Laminate

Fingerboard: Black Richlite

Frets: 20

Tuners: Chrome enclosed

Nut Width: 134"

Scale Length: 25.4"

Onboard Electrics: Fishman Sonitone USB Strings Fitted: Martin SP Lifespan Phosphor Bronze Light Gauge

**Gig Bag/Case Included:** No

ACOUSTIC TEST RESULTS

**Pros:** Reliable build quality; stylish looks and 'that' name on the headstock.

**Cons:** Tone lacks some character; no case. **Overall:** xA good guitar but one that may struggle to standout against similarly-priced all solid guitars.

ACOUSTIC RATING

Sound Quality: OOOO

Build Quality: OOOO

Value for Money:

**5 Stars:** Superb, almost faultless.

4 Stars: Excellent, hard to beat. 3 Stars: Good, covers all bases well.

2 or 1 Stars: Below average, poor.

C.F. Martin & Co.

www.martinguitar.com www.westsidedistribution.com electronics, with a Fishman Sonitone USB pickup/preamp tucked away inside the soundhole to offer some extra-convenient electro functionality – not just for live performance but for super-simple recording as well.

Without knowing which box I was to open first, I ended up first coming to grips with the curvaceous GPX1AE in the first instance. I have to admit, despite knowing about the amount of artificial materials used in the construction, the guitar feels pretty good – structurally sound, neatly built and from the sound of a few taps, plenty resonant too. One possible concern is the lack of binding, which will leave both guitars prone to potentially more serious damage around the edges of the solid spruce top if the guitars were to take a lot of knocks.

The guitar definitely displays a certain rustic charm thanks to the finishing and purity of design that only Martin has truly mastered. The GPX1AE is substantially sized but manageable thanks to its 'Grand Performance' body style. The 00X1AE, by comparison, is much smaller and more compact, making it feel somewhat easier to play as a result. I'm a huge fan of the Grand Auditoriumstyle shape so I was expecting to

find myself leaning

more towards the GPX, but in truth there's something immediately more exciting and satisfying about the feel of the 00 in the lap. It screams 'pick up and play' right from the off, whereas the GPX feels a little more generic by comparison.

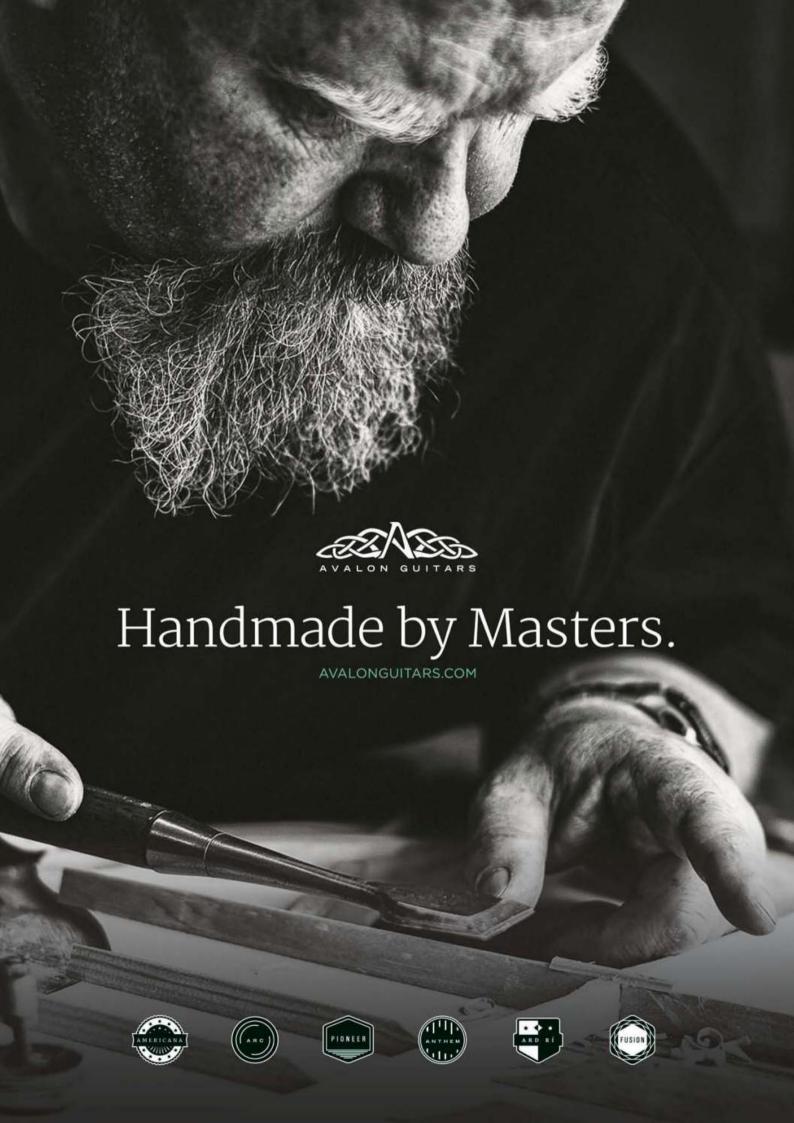
Both guitars share the same number of frets – 14 apiece before the neck meets the body, and a further six available for those with tendrils for fingers. Both are intonated well and the fret finishing is every bit as good as you would expect from Martin, even at this (relatively) entry-level price point. Consistency is so important for instruments in this price range so it's good to see that even with what some may call 'compromises' in the build quality Martin has ensured everything is carried out in an exacting way.

If ever an acoustic guitar newbie needed a demonstration of how body shape affects the tone and character of a guitar, I would point them to these guitars. As I mentioned earlier, I started with the GPX and I have to confess to being slightly,

nonplussed, shall we say.

There's nothing
particularly wrong
with the tone at all
and therein lies the
problem – it's exactly
what you expect a
laminate guitar to
be. There's plenty of
projection and volume,
but character is a little











"The whole guitar just feels a little more eager and energetic – it begs to be played and has a distinctive, sweet voice that matches up wonderfully with a variety of playing styles"

lacking. The tone sits firmly in the middle, neither offering a booming low end nor a sparkling high. There is a definite push more towards the mids in my opinion, but not to the same degree that an all-mahogany instrument would accomplish. It might be that this is exactly what you're looking for – the tone blends in with just about any set-up and would never overshadow a singing voice, for example. As such, we'd suggest this guitar is well suited to open-mic nights or similar, but if you're planning to sit back and let the guitar do the talking, then this might not be the best choice. As it stands, I found the guitar a little, well, neutral.

The 00, on the other hand, couldn't be more different. Where the GPX adhered to my preconceptions about guitars sporting composite materials, the 00 laughs in its face and defies all expectations. The low end has more presence and clarity, while the top end has more zing and energy. Combined with the enhanced playability and comfort

of that smaller frame and a slightly narrower playing profile on the neck, the whole guitar just feels a little more eager and energetic – it begs to be played and has a distinctive, sweet voice that matches up wonderfully with a variety of playing styles.

I'm a big fan of playing about with tunings when reviewing guitars – I just find that lowering the pitch reveals any inconsistencies in a guitar's character while also revealing a little bit of hidden potential. In this case, I found that the GPX retreated still further into its stable,

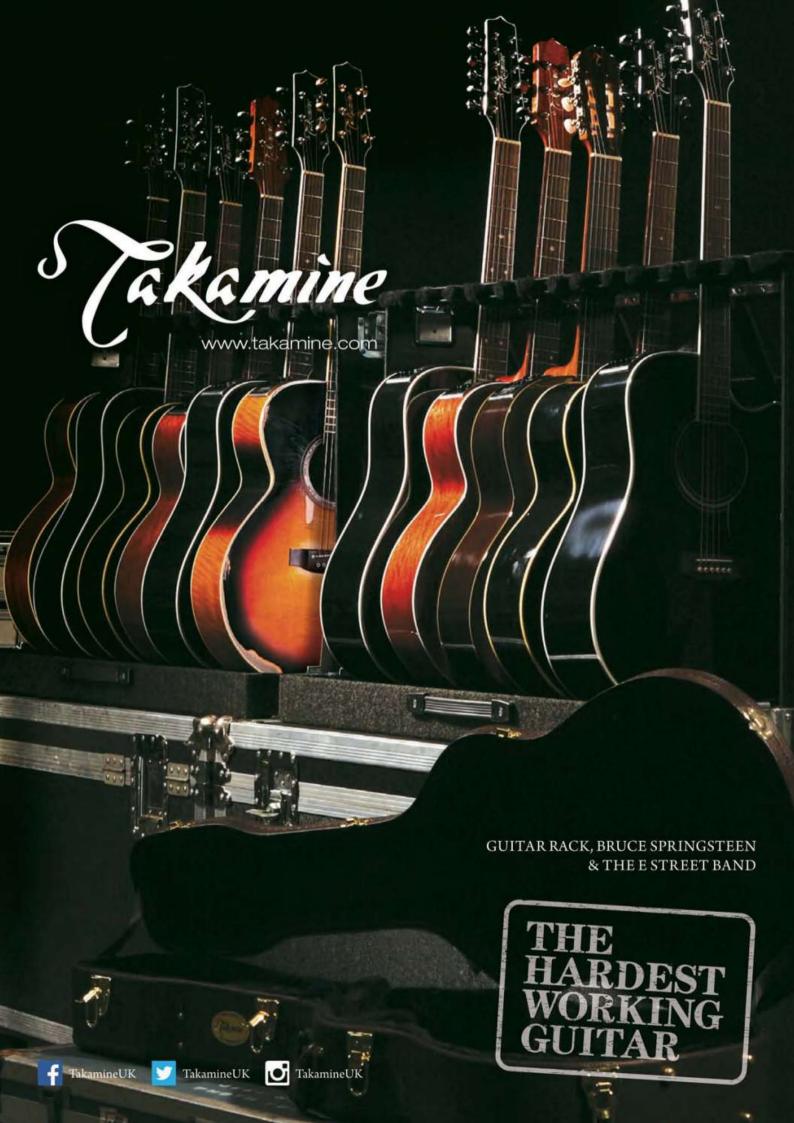
everyman-like character. Everything was the same, just... lower. Note definition wasn't an issue, thankfully, and certainly the guitar remained perfectly acceptable, but there were no surprises to be had.

Once again, switching back to the 00 was like taking a set of earplugs out. The lower strings, even downtuned, had plenty of oomph, while still retaining clarity, and the high strings shifted down to create a more focused, slightly less toppy high end that perfectly complemented the extra beef in the low end. The decreased string tension also meant you could chuck those notes around that little bit more, with string bends and vibrato loosening up slightly to create a bit of a rockier, bluesy vibe. I enjoyed it so much that I managed to wreck my callouses and build

up some new blisters, and
I can think of no clearer
evidence of a good guitar.
Of course, the acoustic

performance is but one aspect to consider with these guitars, and so we must consider the pluggedin capabilities as well. I don't normally expect

too much from electro
guitars in the price
range and largely
the performance
here is no different
to the norm. What
you get is a very
simple representation
of the acoustic sound
- the sonic footprint of









#### **C.F. MARTIN & CO. 00X1AE**

NEED TO KNOW

Manufacturer: Martin
Model: 00X1AE
RRP: £599
Body Size:
Made In: Mexico

**Top:** Solid Sitka spruce **Back and Sides:** Mahogany Patterned HPL

Back and Sides: Manogany Patterned HPL

Neck: Birch Laminate

Fingerboard: Black Richlite

Frets: 20

Tuners: Chrome enclosed
Nut Width: 1 11/16"

Scale Length: 25.4"

Onboard Electrics: Fishman Sonitone USB Strings Fitted: Martin SP Lifespan Phosphor Bronze Light Gauge

Gig Bag/Case Included: No

ACOUSTIC TEST RESULTS

**Pros:** Surprisingly good acoustic tone; reliably well-built; again, 'that' name on the headstock. **Cons:** No case.

**Overall:** A capable, affordable and great-sounding guitar. A real find and possibly one of Martin's best-kept secrets.

ACOUSTIC RATING

Sound Quality: 🔾 🔾 🔾 🔾 🔾 🔾 Value for Money: 🔾 🔾 🔾 🔾

5 Stars: Superb, almost faultless. 4 Stars: Excellent, hard to beat. 3 Stars: Good, covers all bases well. 2 or 1 Stars: Below average, poor.

CONTACT DETAILS:

C.F. Martin & Co.

www.martinguitar.com www.westsidedistribution.com the piezo pickup is reasonably evident but certainly perfectly usable in a live situation. Certainly some effects would make a positive difference too, but if you're relying on a more accurate electro tone you'll need to invest appropriately.

What's more intriguing about these two is the fact that their Fishman systems also support a direct USB connection – allowing a much easier method for recording your guitar at home. The connection worked a treat with every device I could find, working with zero issues on the Windows, Mac and iOS devices that I was able to test. The tone you get is pretty much a mirror of the output you get through the regular jack – good quality of signal but the piezo presence is still there.

My experience with two seemingly similar guitars was a true tale of two halves. While the GPX was not as stimulating as its sibling, I found myself clutching the 00 much more tightly as I reluctantly tucked it back into its box. It's the polar opposite of what my normal playing and buying habits would normally lead me to, but you just can't argue with a guitar like this. If you're an aspiring singersongwriter after an accompanying instrument that will sit

nicely behind your vocals,

I'd definitely suggest giving the GPX a try, though definitely alongside a few rivals. However, if you're looking for pure acoustic performance then I think most people will prefer the 00, as I have.

Acoustic differences aside, both guitars are fantastically well made – though neither is the best value for money.

The fact is that the lion's share of both instruments' construction is made from composite materials, and while there's nothing wrong with that in and of itself, there will likely be people who want a more traditional build. The fact remains that there are many other options out there providing much more bang for your buck. You do pay for the name in a sense – but what a name it is. These do play like Martin guitars and that in itself is

reason enough to consider a purchase.

To complete the analogy set out at the beginning of the review - with the night now at an end, and the club well and truly explored - I feel like I can head home satisfied that I've had a good night out, albeit it a mixed one. I've had a taste of the high life in two doses, with one much more successful than the other - but I still feel like I haven't quite

broken into the VIP

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# THE MANZER BY LINDA MANZER

Old-school know-how, the finest of tonewoods and uber-skilled craftsmanship goes into everything that leaves Linda Manzer's workshop, which includes this eyewatering £17,000 creation, 'The Manzer'. Stephen Bennett dons the white gloves

WORDS: STEPHEN BENNETT IMAGES PROVIDED BY: THE ACQUISTIC MUSIC COMPANY

t's been said that Linda Manzer's guitars sound like grand pianos. So why bother? Get a Steinway. Indeed. But then, try carrying one to a gig. Either way, few of us will ever get to pick one up (a Manzer, that is) so the evidence must be sought in the sublime recordings of some of the world's great players, including Pat Metheny, Julian Lage, Paul Simon, Milton Nascimento and even Carlos Santana. There's something a bit special about a Manzer. Maybe because, as a sworn hand-tool devotee, it's coming directly from her hands to yours, or maybe it's in the certainty that, as it's held and played, there's no sense of a machine ever being capable of producing this degree of wonderfully 'organic' non-perfection; the unique, human ingredient that renders the mechanically flawless merely soulless. The great violins and cellos of the 18th century must have felt like this. The Manzer - six-strings (well, you never know with Linda), cedar top, Indian rosewood back and sides - is everything a classic, hand-built acoustic guitar should be. And then some. It's elegant, understated and oozes class in the same way a '50s Rolex shames its flashier modern counterparts. All that skilled craftsmanship, plain old-school know-how and hard, physical graft has been channelled into creating the irresistible, indefinable allure of pure, unalloyed quality.

A builder of Manzer's stature could probably make a beautiful guitar from the left overs of a flat-pack wardrobe. As trumpeted in these pages on many occasions, it's the build process that shapes the source material's life as an instrument. Give a monkey a diamond and a lump of gold, and chances are he won't make you an engagement ring. And here we have a cedar top, with all the colour and soft glow of a Werther's Original, plus rosewood back and



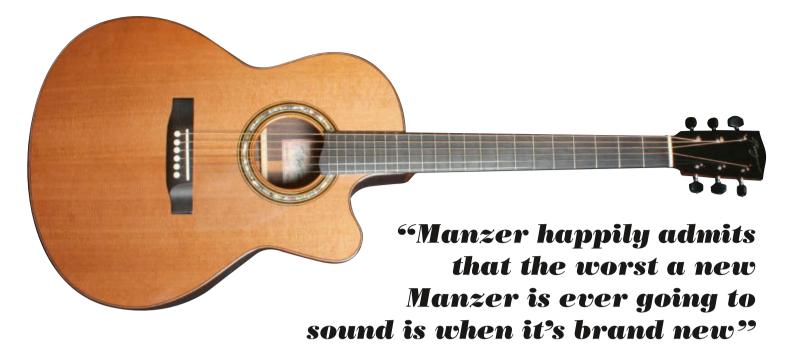
"Manzer
could probably
make a
beautiful
guitar from
the left overs
of a flat-pack
wardrobe"

sides. But surely there's more – or at least the exotically named promise of more, I thought. We're currently in thrall to a hard-wood Holy Grail mythology, after all, with new candidates emerging almost weekly. But no. The Manzer makes no fabulously esoteric wood claims. It doesn't need to. The source materials here were simply beautiful to start with and have now been fashioned by a great luthier into something exquisite.

The bling-free Manzer's balance, clarity and individual note definition, from a drop-D bass to the highest treble, is a thing of wonder. The guitar has an elegantly precise articulation that seems to grow all the more friendly and receptive with further acquaintance.

Maybe it's the cedar, with its assumed greater 'warmth' as compared to spruce, but there's an initial intimacy here that fools the player into thinking this is a quiet guitar. Far from it. The sound blossoms to meet each new demand – fingers, picks, strums, the lot – responding with both an unfussy calm and the seemingly fathomless depth to cope with any level of attack. If the Manzer did poetry it would sound like Richard Burton reading 'Under Milk Wood' – all that velvet packing a serious punch. And if there's a better DADGAD guitar out there – well, I'm going to stop there, because there just isn't.

With the Manzer Wedge integral to the design, there's the illusion of sitting with a much smaller-bodied instrument. Basically, as per Linda's radical-simple innovation, the body-width tapers from narrower at the chest to wider on the knee. As with all the best design concepts, it feels so naturally comfortable you almost miss it. The discreet, upper-bout, oval sound-port bigs up the volume from the player's perspective, facilitating



#### THE MANZER BY LINDA MANZER

Manufacturer: Linda Manzer
Model: The Manzer
RRP: £16,995
Body Size: 15 9/16 OM
Made In: Canada
Top: Cedar
Back and Sides: Rosewood
Neck: Mahogany
Fingerboard: Ebony

Frets: 21
Tuners: Gotoh
Nut Width: 1¾"
Scale Length: 25 ½"
Strings Fitted: D'Addario EXP 16

Gig Bag/Case Included: Hoffee Carbon Fibre Custom

ACOUSTIC TEST RESULTS

**Pros:** Unparalleled tone and projection. Belllike clarity in the upper register to balance the subterranean bass notes.

Cons: Only the player's reluctance ever to put it down and get on with the boring stuff.

Overall: This one's special. The guitar little acoustics dream of growing up to become.

ACOUSTIC RATING

Sound Quality: OOOOO

Build Quality: OOOOO

Value for Money: OOOOO

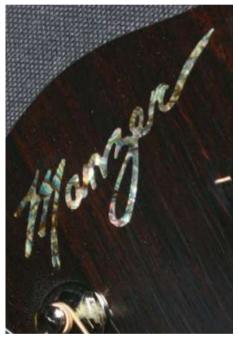
5 Stars: Superb, almost faultless.
4 Stars: Excellent, hard to beat.
3 Stars: Good, covers all bases well.
2 or 1 Stars: Below average, poor.

CONTACT DETAILS:
The Acoustic Music Co

www.theacousticmusicco.co.uk



cathedral-sized chords when pushed and all of that stratospheric 'headroom' her guitars are famous for. Then there's the equally renowned, always amazing 'piano' tone - that bell-like, crystal-clear sustain up at the higher altitudes of the fretboard. This may be a result of a fundamental difference in approach between Manzer and some other builders and her preference for slightly thicker woods. Hence, there's probably a longer wait for a Manzer guitar to 'grow into itself'. Linda believes that thinner tops can sound great from the off but left thicker they'll develop and mature towards the sound she's aiming for. In her own words: "There's more there to move," so that the tone won't 'blow out' at higher volume or when played consistently hard. She makes the comparison with a dancer who's initially tight and needs to warm up.



So the player, like the dancer, will have to work a bit – this is a lifetime commitment, after all. Consequently, the Manzer is physically that bit heavier than many guitars of similar size but, by way of endorsement, Pat Metheny reckons his first instrument from her, the one he christened the 'Linda 6', is still getting better after almost four decades. Manzer herself happily admits that the worst a new Manzer is ever going to sound is when it's brand new – it's just waiting to be activated.

This particular manifestation of her craft also features a softly-angled, Venetian cutaway for increased access to those astonishing trebles and a delicately hand-fashioned rosette in abalone, box and rosewood above an almost invisible, wafer-thin transparent scratch-plate. Closer inspection of the sides reveals subtle white coach-lines enhancing the dark-then-

## PERFECTION





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"One player picked it up and just didn't 'get it'. Another played it and was literally moved to tears by the tonal response<sup>22</sup>

milk chocolate grain of the rosewood, while the headstock is a model of restraint; deepspace, black ebony illuminated by the abalone star cluster of the Manzer signature logo. The industry-gold-standard Gotoh 510 tuners are finished in a similar anti-matter, black ebony.

One of the things that makes Linda Manzer (and her instruments) different is that she doesn't get caught up in comparisons or assessments of what other builders are doing. Any competition is with herself as few can match these standards anyway. She insists it's the trust in her knowledge and experience that's vital, and she has the clear, refreshingly straightforward philosophy that building a guitar is an intuitive, 'learn and adjust as you go' process. She accepts that two similar-looking pieces of wood from the same tree can sound completely different - trying to match them,



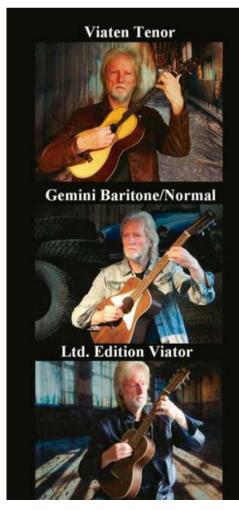
tonally, is pointless - and that's all part of the joy. Linda has learned to listen as she works, and she's had to break and then remake the rules. The energy that goes into the build is then returned in the sound. Linda doesn't like to over-think things; 'feel' is the key, throughout.

Anyone fortunate enough to be packing the kind of 'wedge' necessary to acquire a guitar like this might consider parting with it fast as Manzer is about to embark on a yearlong project with six other Canadian luthiers (Laskin, de Jonge, Wren et al) that will honour their famous 'Group of Seven' compatriots visual artists from the early part of the 20th century. Each luthier will be building a specially dedicated guitar to commemorate one of said seven for a series of films and exhibitions. New Manzer models, therefore, unless you're called Pat or Julian, could be at a premium.

In attempting to de-code some of the mystery of the luthier's art, Manzer cites the legendary Jimmy D'Aquisto, who once told her that a great guitar will always find its owner as, if a player buys it but doesn't connect, it'll come back soon enough looking for someone else. And that two people playing the same guitar will have a totally different experience, as was proven recently, strikingly, with this very instrument when, within the space of half an hour (as witnessed by Acoustic), one good player picked it up and just didn't 'get it'. He was instantly followed by another, who played it and was literally moved to tears by the tonal response.

If that sounds a bit over the top to the cynical UK ear, don't knock it 'til you've tried it. Maybe it's time we all went out, robbed the nearest bank, and came home with a Manzer.





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### FRESHMAN FAIA-HB

The popular Maple Ridge series is at the heart of Freshman's acoustic catalogue. The new FA1AHB from that range is one of a batch of well-spec'd guitars fitted with Fishman electronics. designed to expand the series and give greater 'electro' choice

WORDS: STEVE HARVEY IMAGES: RICHARD ECCLESTONE

lasgow-based Freshman Guitars was born out of one man's desire to offer high quality, high spec'd guitars at competitive price points. Having built a company to achieve these goals, you'd think Sean Kelly would sit back and take things easy, but he's having none of it.

Freshman Guitars continues to launch new models and options but, refreshingly, retains focus on entry-level and firstupgrade guitars.

The FA1 series is part of the awardwinning Maple Ridge series; a collection of guitars designed to accommodate those with what Freshman describes as a 'smaller budget'. Our review model is a folk-bodied guitar (which is essentially a 000-size), with a cutaway and onboard Fishman electronics.

Having a smaller body makes the FA1 a comfortable guitar to play. It sits neatly on the lap and is well-balanced, the centre of gravity being somewhere between the 17th and 18th frets. The combination of the tighter lower bout and well-designed cutaway make easy work of reaching the higher registers; the 20th fret of the top three strings is well within reach, without much of a stretch.

As part of the Maple Ridge series, the FA1A boasts a solid 'A' Grade Sitka spruce top – something not often seen at this price point. As you'd guess from the product code, the 'HB' refers to the guitar's honeyburst finish. The considered way the 'burst finish has been layered means that the pronounced, straight grain of the Sitka spruce is still visible. A Freshman-designed rosewood bridge contrasts well against the lighter hue of the soundboard.



66The FAIA boasts a solid 'A' Grade Sitka spruce top something not often seen at this price'

The two-piece back and coachline-edged sides are made from mahogany, as is the two-piece neck. The rosewood fingerboard is home to standard position dot markers and 20 medium frets, each of which has been filed to ensure no jagged or sharp edges. Freshman's now familiar headstock shape and logo sit alongside somewhat basic unbranded, chrome enclosed machine heads. The headstock angle is the typical 14 degrees.

Overall, the FA1A's finish is excellent. The guitar's joints are tight and clean, the inside of the body gives evidence only of high quality control standards, and the polyurethane finish is even and blemishfree. For this reviewer's taste, the finish is a little too thick, but it's a subjective thing. Thicker gloss finishes can sometimes feel gloopy or sticky, though a quick wipe over with a damp cloth soon remedies that.

On a guitar at this price point it's good to see a bone nut and saddle, and we're particularly pleased to see a strap button on the underside of the cutaway. Too often lower end guitars come fitted with one strap button, but not the second, leaving the owner to fashion a fastening round the headstock - generally with a shoelace. A strap button on the underside of the heel or the cutaway (and not the heel cap) is the way forward. It's a small detail, but it makes all the difference. Thumbs up to Freshman for this inclusion.

Onboard electrics come courtesy of Fishman's Isys 201 pickup system, which features a seven-segment LED tuner, volume control, and low profile phase and contour push buttons. The control panel is less than two inches high and wide, meaning less



#### FRESHMAN FA1A-HB

NEED TO KNOW

**Manufacturer:** Freshman Guitars **Model:** FA1AHB

RRP: £299.95

**Body Size:** 000 (Folk Body, cutaway)

Made In: China

**Top:** Solid 'A' Grade Sitka Spruce **Back and Sides:** Mahogany (Laminate)

Neck: Mahogany Fingerboard: Rosewood

Frets: 20

Tuners: Geared w/Chrome Buttons

Nut Width: 43mm

Scale Length: 650mm

Onboard Electrics: Fishman ISYS 201

**Strings Fitted:** D'Addario 12-Gauge Phosphor Bronze

Gig Bag/Case Included: No

#### ACOUSTIC TEST RESULTS

**Pros:** Fantastic value for money; great build quality; capable onboard electrics

Cons: High gloss finish a little thick for some tastes;

budget tuners **Overall:** An excellent package offering likeable and

**Overall:** An excellent package offering likeable and usable acoustic tones from a reliable and well-built guitar, excellent amplified performance.

ACOUSTIC RATING

Sound Quality: 🔾 🔾 🔾 🔾

Build Quality: •••••
Value for Money: ••••

5 Stars: Superb, almost faultless.

4 Stars: Excellent, hard to beat.

3 Stars: Good, covers all bases well.

2 or 1 Stars: Below average, poor.

CONTACT DETAILS:

Freshman Guitars

www.freshmanguitars.net



wood has been excised to accommodate it. The system includes a Fishman Sonicore pickup. This isn't the most sophisticated system available, but it's incredibly easy to use, wholly fit for purpose and unobtrusive. The Contour feature acts as a one-button tone control and lets you choose between a natural sound with no EQ (button out) or a 'scooped' sound with emphasised treble and bass, and reduced midrange (button in). The Phase control lets you improve bass response at low volumes and helps to suppress feedback at high volumes.



system - all for less than £300"

We particularly liked the fact that the LED tuner does not require the guitar to be plugged in to be operational, allowing for unamplified tuning. When plugged in, however, engaging the tuner mutes the guitar's output.

A standard 9V battery powers the system and when, after approximately 125 hours of use you have to change the battery, it's a simple affair with the battery housing being at the side of the lower bout. In reality, with a spare battery to hand, you could easily change mid-gig. No need to remove the

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14536 - Aria AW35N Acoustic Guitar, Secondhand 13028 - Alkin The Forty Three / .45 3027 - Alkin AA Deluxe Custom OOO Figured Walnut 13022 - Alkin OO Am Special Parlour Guitar 13022 - ABRIT OU AM Special Parlour Gulfar 13578 - BSG J10F Jumbo Electro Acoustic, Used 14197 - Breedlove Discovery Concert Lefthanded 13367 - Brook Igmar Medium Jumbo Handmade 13189 - Brook Tamar Medium Jumbo Handmade 13188 - Brook Tamar OM Size Handmade Gulfar 13988 - Brook Tamar Concerns and Literature 13183 - Brook Taw OM Size Handmade Guitar
13366 - Brook Teign Dreadhought Handmade Guitar
13906 - Cort AD810-OP AD Series Acoustic Guitar
13909 - Cort AD840 CF OP Electro Acoustic Guitar
13909 - Cort AD840 CF OP Electro Acoustic Guitar
4612 - Dave King Kathina COO Model, Sunhurst
4770 - EKO Ranger Vintage Acoustic, Natural
13544 - Bxo Olivetro Pojini Libi Edition Acoustic
13847 - Bxo Panger 6 VR Fastlok, Vrt. SS Gloss
13552 - Bxo Vintage Ranger 6 in Black, Reissue
13851 - Bxo TRI Oli Bxo WEO Blactro in Natural
14645 - Exiphone PR3505 Dreadhought Used

13891 - EXO THURS CWEQ Electro in Natural 14645 - Epiphone PR350S Dreadhought, Used 14246 - Faith Jupiter Acoustic, Nat, Secondhand 14537 - Faidon FG100 Red Acoustic Gultar, Used 6975 - Fender CD60, Black 5096 - Fender CD60, Natural

5096 - Fender CD60, Natural 14304 - Fender Starcaster Acoustic Guitar Pack 6142 - Gibson Hummingbird Acoustic Guitar in Sburst 14526 - Guild D62-NT USA Made 7090 - K Yairi Niew Yorker NY0021B, Natural 13614 - K Yairi YT1 Acoustic Guitar 12652 - Lakewood D14 Dreadhought Acoustic Guitar 9184 - Lakewood D18 Dreadhought, Natural 12699 - Lakewood M18 Grand Concert Acoustic Guitar 12659 - Lakewood M18 Grand Concert Acoustic Guitar 12656 - Lakewood M18 Grand Concert Acoustic Guitar

12655 - Lakewood M18 Grand Concert Apoustic Guitar 13386 - Landola D85 Dreachought Apoustic Used 8308 - Levin SW203 Acoustic Guitar in Black 8310 - Levin SW203 Acoustic Guitar in Natural 14127 - Lun Vista Mustrap Glectro Apoustic 5702 - Martin D28 Dreachrought, Natural 5013 - Martin D41 Dreachought, Natural 7115 - Martin LX1 Little Martin 6009 - Martin 0008EC Eric Clapton, Natural 13581 - Martin SW0MGT Orchestra Shape, Used 942 - Northwood M80 12

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13681 - Martin SWOMGT Orchestra Shape, Used
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13291 - Tanglewood TPEFLS
14061 - Tanglewood TW190 SM Orchestra Shape
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15955 - Tanglewood TW40 DAN Dreadhought
15956 - Tanglewood TW40 PAN Parlour Acoustic Nat
13081 - Vintage V4000CSB, Cheny Sunburst
13279 - Vintage V400MP Maple Acoustic Guitar
13299 - Vintage V400MP Maple Acoustic Guitar
13299 - Vintage V400MP Maple Acoustic Guitar
13297 - Vintage V5000DPB Paul Brett 6-String
14496 - Vintage V5000DPB Paul Brett 6-String
14496 - Vintage V1000 CSB Jumbo, Cheny Sunburst
13272 - Vintage V1100 CSB Jumbo, Cheny Sunburst
13272 - Vintage V1100 CSB Jumbo, Cheny Sunburst
13282 - Yamaha F310 Dreadhought Tobacco Sunburst
14426 - Yamaha F310 Dreadhought Tobacco Sunburst
14426 - Yamaha F370DW Acoustic Guitar, Natural
13691 - Yamaha F370DW Acoustic Guitar, Natural
13694 - Yamaha F370DN Acoustic Guitar
13087 - Yamaha F370DS Acoustic Guitar
13087 - Yamaha F370S Oriental Blue Burst
13088 - Yamaha F372S Dreadhought Brown Stburst
15592 - Yamaha F372S Dreadhought Brown Stburst
15592 - Yamaha F372S Dreadhought Brown Stburst
15592 - Yamaha F372S Dreadhought Brown Stburst

13308 - Yamaha FG720S Dreadhought Brown S/burst 5592 - Yamaha FG720S Dreadhought, Natural 8019 - YAMAHA FG730S Electro Acoustic Guitar

9181 - Yamaha FS720S Acoustic, Natural 14483 - Yamaha FS720S Acoustic, Black

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10918 - Breedlove USA Gold D/SRE 14690 - Breedlove Focus Special Edition Redwood 10294 - Breedlove Retro D/ERe with LR Baggs 14689 - Breedlove Revival DR Deluxe 14089 - Breedowe Voice Auditorium Small Jumbo
14686 - Breedowe Voice Auditorium Small Jumbo
14686 - Breedowe Voice Concert Myrtie
14630 - Breedowe Voice Revival 000/SMe
10086 - Brian May Rhapsody Electro, Cherry
14571 - Collings ÖM2H Blactro Acoustic, Used
13908 - Cort MFIE NS Electro Acoustic, Natural Satin
13920 - Cort SFX FM TBK, Trans Black
14222 - Crather GAE6 Electro Acoustic, Natural
14769 - Elko Ranger Ed Virtage Series, Black
13852 - Bio TRI 018 CW EO Honey Burst
12363 - Faith RKV Venus Concert Cutaway/Electro
12360 - Fender Avril Lavigne Newporter
14533 - Fender CD220/SE Dreachnought, Zebrano
14534 - Fender CD200/SE Dreachnought Elec, Sunburst
10320 - Fender CD60/SE Mahogany Electro Acoustic
14605 - Fender Limited Edition Paisley Telecoustic 14688 - Breedlove Voice Auditorium Small Jumbo

14343 - Alvarez ABT60 Baritone Guitar

6 String Electro Acoustics



14606 - Fender Limited Edition Paisley Telecoustic 12671 - Fender Torry Alva Sonoran SCE, 14366 - Ibanez SGE 130 Jumbo Electro, Used 14541 - Ibanez V70CE Cutaway Natural, Secondhand 4555 - Jimmy Moon Bryan Adams Signature 4554 - Jimmy Moon PF0003 Electro, Pau Ferro B&S 4554 - Jimmy Moon PF0003 Electro, Pau Feiro B8 6948 - Jimmy Moon PD3, Bectro, Natural 9562 - LAG 1300AE Electro Acoustic Guitar 9186 - Lakewood D14CP Electro Acoustic, Natural 12674 - Lakewood, J14 Bartione Jumbo Electro 12672 - Lakewood, J14CP Jumbo Electro 13669 - Lakewood, J14CP Jumbo Electro 12672 - Lakewood J.14CP Jumbo Electro 12658 - Lakewood M14 CP 12678 - Lakewood M18CP Grand Concert Electro 12679 - Lakewood Sungha Jung Signature Electro 14729 - Luna Heartsong Series Parlor Electro 14730 - Luna Henna Cesis Steel String Electro 1471 - Luna Vista Eagle Electro Acoustic Guitar 1471 - Luna Vista Wolf Electro Acoustic Guitar 1471 - Waestro Raffles RH-CSBA Custorn 13714 - Waestro Raffles RH-CSBA Custorn Jumbo 12666 - Waestro Raffles Rh-CSBA Custorn Jumbo 12666 - Waestro Raffles Rh-CSBA Custorn Jumbo

- Maestro Raffles Flame Maple Cust Bectro - Maestro Raffles IR-CSB R Small Jumbo Electro Maestro Raffles MOT Small Jumbo Electro Maestro Raffles Monkey Pod Electro Maestro Raffles MR-CSB A Custom Jumbo

12790 - Maestro Raffles MDT Small Jumbo biscro 
12789 - Maestro Raffles MR-CSB ACustom Jumbo 
12781 - Maestro Raffles MR-CSB ACustom Jumbo 
12701 - Maestro Rosetta RD Dreadnought Electro 
12782 - Maestro Rosetta MDT Dreadnought Electro 
12782 - Maestro Rosetta MDT Dreadnought Electro 
12783 - Maestro Rosetta MDT Dreadnought Electro 
12793 - Maestro Rosetta MDT Dreadnought Electro 
12794 - Maestro Rosetta MDT Dreadnought Electro 
12794 - Maestro Singa Flame Maple Custom Electro 
12794 - Maestro Singa Flame Maple Custom Electro 
12594 - Maestro Singa Handmade Electro Acoustic 
13712 - Maestro Singa Handmade Electro Acoustic 
13713 - Maestro Singa MFDT Medium Jumbo 
13209 - Maestro Singa MFDT Medium Jumbo 
13716 - Maestro Singa MFDT Medium Jumbo 
13717 - Maestro Vidoria with fitted LR Baggs 
13718 - Maestro Vidoria with fitted LR Baggs 
13208 - Maestro Vidoria with fitted LR Baggs 
13208 - Maestro Vidoria with fitted LR Baggs 
13208 - Maestro Vidoria with fitted LR Baggs 
13783 - Maestro Vidoria With fitted LR Baggs 
13863 - Martin & Co 000X1AE Electro Acoustic 
14479 - Martin ODRSGT Electro Acoustic Guitar 
14477 - Martin DRSC Electro Acoustic Guitar 
14477 - Martin DRSC Electro Acoustic Guitar 
14478 - Martin DRSC Electro Acoustic Guitar 
13866 - Martin Ed Sheerarn X Signature Ed Electro 
14214 - Martin OMC1E Electro Acoustic Guitar 
13866 - Martin Ed Sheerarn X Signature 
13674 - Martin OMMAE Electro Acoustic Guitar 
13675 - Maestro Vidoria Models in stock Now 
14169 - PRS SE Alex Lifeson Signature 
13675 - Rainsong SOMH000N2 VMS Studio Electro 
14224 - Martin OMMAE Electro Acoustic Guitar 
13676 - Martin Ed Sheerard Common 
14214 - Martin OMMAE Electro Acoustic Guitar 
13676 - Martin Ed Sheerard Common 
14214 - Martin OMMAE Electro Acousti

Javannine ENZOZ Electro Accustic Takannine GD30CE Electro Accustic, Nat Takannine GD30CE Cutaway Electro Accustic Takannine GR30CE Brown Surburst Takannine GR15CE Electro Accustic, Nat Takannine GR35CE Electro Accustic, Nat Takannine GR30CE Electro Accustic Guttar Takannine GX11ME NS Takannine GX11ME NS 4685 4264

14264 - Takamine GX11ME NS
14261 - Takamine GX93E New Yorker Electro
14299 - Takamine P1DC Electro Acoustic Guitar
14290 - Takamine P1DC Electro Acoustic Guitar
14290 - Takamine P3DC Electro Acoustic Guitar
14296 - Tanglewcod TPESPCEZS Electro Acoustic
14499 - Tanglewcod TW115 SSCE
13498 - Tanglewcod TW40 DANE Dreadmought Electro
1487 - Tanglewcod TW40 DANE Dreadmought Electro
1487 - Tanglewcod TW40 DANE Orchestra
14830 - Tanglewcod TW40 DSVSE in Vintage Sunburst
14840 - Tanglewcod TW40 SVSE in Vintage Sunburst
14840 - Tanglewcod TW40 WOPE Acoustic Guitar
14840 - Tanglewcod TW40 WOPE Acoustic Guitar
14840 - Tanglewcod TW40 WOPE Acoustic Guitar
14845 - Tanglewcod TW40 WOPE Acoustic Guitar
14845 - Tanglewcod TW40 WOPE Acoustic Guitar
14845 - Tanglewcod TW40 WOPE Acoustic Guitar
14849 - Vintage Brignin WF900 Mayflower Deluxe
14850 - Vintage Cordon Citrap Signature

8007 - Vintage Gordon Giltrap Signature 13399 - Vintage VECJ100 Jumbo Acoustic Black 10311 - Westcoast SW201 VT Bedtro, Sunburst 8306 - Westcoast SW201-VT Bedtro Acoustic, Nat 8006 - Westcoast SW201-VT Electro Acoustic, Nat 14487 - Yarnaha A1R Natural Electro Acoustic, Nat 14483 - Yarnaha A1R Natural Electro Acoustic, Nat 14493 - Yarnaha ACM Bectro Acoustic Gultar, Nat 14427 - Yarnaha APX1000 Slimline Gultar, Natural 14437 - Yarnaha APX700 II Thinline, Natural 14437 - Yarnaha APX700 II Thinline, Natural 14437 - Yarnaha CPX1000 Electro Acoustic, Natural 14441 - Yarnaha CPX500 III, Natural 14441 - Yarnaha CPX500 III, Natural 6961 - Yarnaha CPX700 Electro Acoustic Sandburst 8020 - Yarnaha CPX700 Thinle Firsh 9304 - Yarnaha CPX500 Brown Surburst 14423 - Yarnaha FGX720SC, Brown Surburst 14422 - Yarnaha FGX730SC Electro Acoustic, Nat 14421 - Yarnaha FGX730SC Electro Acoustic, Nat 14421 - Yarnaha FGX730SC Electro Acoustic, Nat 14421 - Yarnaha FGX730SC Bectro Acoustic, Nat 14421 - Yarnaha FGX730SC Quitar, Natural 14420 - Yarnaha FXSTOSC, Natural

14421 - Yarmaha PX310A Gultar, Natural 14420 - Yarmaha PX310A Gultar, Natural 6966 - Yarnaha PX370C Dicadhought Electro, Black 6965 - Yarnaha PX370C Electro Acoustic, Natural 8141 - Yarnaha SLG110S Silent Steel Shring Gultar 14418 - Yarnaha SLG110S Silent Steel Shring Gultar 14522 - Yarnaha SLG200S Silent Gultar, Steel

Classical Guitars



13026 - Admira Concerto Classical Guitar Azahar Model 105 Cadete Classica Azahar Model 31A Classical Guitar 6031 - Azahar Model 40B Classical Guitar Joan Cashimira 3A Concert, Used Mendieta Conservatoire C Classical 8507 6777 - Mendieta Estudio S Classical 8240 - Mendieta Estudio T Classical Guitar 6029 - Ramirez 1NE Classical Guitar 6335 - Ramirez 2E Classical Guitar 6028 - Ramirez 4E Classical Guitar 5251 - Ramirez AE Classical Guitar 5644 - Ramirez George Harrison Model 6337 - Ramirez R1 Classical Guitar 6336 - Ramirez R2 Classical Guitar Ramirez R4 Classical Guitar 8357 -6027 - Ramirez S1 Classical Guitar 2761 - Ramirez SP Classical Guitar 6441 - Roberto C2 Classical Guitar

9483 - Tanglewood DBT34 3/4 Classical Guitar 2302 - Tanglewood TCMR1 Classical Guitar 10999 - Westcoast Student 4/4 Classical. Red

#### 12 Strings



13865 - Breedlove Pursuit 12 String Acoustic 13907 - Cort Earth 7012ENS Electro 12-String 12227 - Eko 12 String Guitar, Secondhand 14502 - Eko Ranger XII VR Natural, 12 String 14002 - Exc Hangler All VH Natural, 12 Siming 13553 - Exc Vintage Ranger 12 in Black 14525 - Guild JF230-AB USA-Made c1997 9553 - Lag T200D12 12 String Acoustic Guitar 9816 - Rainsong JM3000 Classic Series Electro 9817 - Rainsong WS3000 Classic Series Electro 14256 - Takamine GD30 12 String, Black 13475 - Tanglewood TW145 12 SS CE 14398 - Vintage VE2000GG12 Giltrap 12-String 14349 - Vintage VE8000PB-12 Paul Brett 12706 - Washburn D42S 12 12 String

#### Mandolin Family



8826 - Ashbury AM-325 Octave Mandola. 8824 - Ashbury AM-370 Mandolin 13527 - Blue Moon BB15 Bouzouki GR33001 14198 - Breedlove Crossover Mandolin OO VS, Blik 14028 - Breedlove Crossover OO O Hole, Black 14500 - Breedlove Crossover Mandolin, VV 19300 - Bredduce Classover Wall bollin, Vanhourst 12588 - Fender FM63SS Acoustic Mandolin, Sunburst 12540 - Fender FM63SE Electro Acoustic Mandolin 4551 - Jimmy Moon A Plus E Electro, Natural 9240 - Jimmy Moon A2 Acoustic Mandolin, Natural 4564 - Jimmy Moon A Plus Electro Bouzouki, Nat 4563 - Jimmy Moon Octave Mandolin (Mandola) Nat 4563 - Jimmy Moon Standard Mandolin 9430 - Ozark Flat Back Bouzouki

7221 - Savannah SA115 Electro Mandolin, Used 8315 - Westooast M20 Mandolin Sunburst 2347 - Westooast M20S Mandolin Sunburst 8316 - Westmast M50F Electro Mando

#### **Travel Guitars**



13848 - Eko Tri Mini Honey Burst 3/4 Acoustic 4473 - Luna Safari Henna 3/4 Size Travel Guitar 14473 - LUnit Salari Prenna 34 Size Traver Guitar 14472 - Luna Safari Starry Night 34 Travel Guitar 5214 - Martin & Co LXM Little Martin, Natural 5835 - Martin Backpacker Acoustic Travel Guitar 13856 - Martin Ed Sheeran X Signature Ed Electro 13324 - Martin LX Red Little Martin 7115 - Martin LX1 Little Martin 7320 - Martin LX1E, Electro Travel Guitar

Takamine GX11ME NS 4264 9588 - Tanglewood TW15 Baby All Solid Travel 14628 - Tanglewood TWJLJ 13128 - Vintage VTR800PB Viator Travel Guitar 4437 - Yamaha APXT2 Mini, Dark Red Burst 4522 - Yamaha SLG200S Silent Guitar, Steel

Ukuleles



14684 - Alic 3D Butterfly Soprano Ukulele wiBag
14683 - Alic 3D Waterfall Soprano Ukulele wiBag
14683 - Alic 3D Waterfall Soprano Ukulele wiBag
12564 - Barnes & Mullins BJ306 6-Shing Banjo
14371 - Barnes & Mullins BJ306 6-Shing Banjo
14371 - Barnes & Mullins BJ306 6-Shing Banjo
14618 - Baton Rouge UR4TCE Electro Tenor Ukulele
14636 - Baton Rouge UR4TCE Electro Tenor Ukulele
14636 - Beano Ukulele - 3 Models in Stock Now
14557 - Deering Goodtime Ukulele Banjo
14675 - Elo Evo Concort Ukulele, Cedar Top
14674 - Elo Evo Soprano Ukulele, Cedar Top
14674 - Elo Evo Soprano Ukulele, Cedar Top
14674 - Elo Evo Soprano Special Ukulele, Acacia
13067 - Iberica Soprano Special Ukulele, Wahnut
12338 - Iule Procolo Standard Ukulele, Wahnut
12338 - Iule Procolo Standard Ukulele, Wahnut
12338 - Iule Procolo Standard Ukulele, Wahnut
12339 - Iule Procolo Standard Ukulele
14000 - Kalia KA&BNUBK-C Concert Banjo Ukulele
15000 - Naria Stock Now
13799 - Lakia Soprano Ukulele
1510 - Ohana BK20 Bantone Ukulele
1511 - Ohana BK20 Bantone Ukulele
1516 - Ohana CK10S Concert Ukulele, Black
13634 - Ohana CK10S Concert Ukulele, Black
13633 - Ohana CK15BK Concert Ukulele, Black
13633 - Ohana CK15BK Concert Ukulele, Black
13633 - Ohana CK15BK Concert Ukulele
15269 - Ohana CK15C Concert Ukulele
15269 - Ohana CK30S Concert Ukulele
15269 - Ohana

4508

- Chana SK/OLA Spruce & Mornda Sop Uke - Ohana SK/OLA Sporano Ukulele - Ohana SK/OMG Soprano Ukulele - Ohana SK/OS Soprano Uke, Willow B & S - Ohana SK/OS Soprano Ukulele - Ohana SK/OSH Soprano Ukulele - Ohana SK/OSH Soprano Ukulele - Ohana SK/OSH Soprano Uke 2608

ood Tenor Uke

12008 - Cheana SKS1SE Sim Bectro Soprano Uke 4708 - Cheana TK10 Tenor Ukulele 4465 - Cheana TK20 Tenor Ukulele 4465 - Cheana TK20 Tenor Ukulele 14209 - Cheana TK25-10 Tole 10 String Tenor 12611 - Cheana TK35-10 Tole 10 String Tenor 12611 - Cheana TK36-10 Tole 10 String Tenor 12611 - Cheana TK36-10 Tole Gig Bag 13311 - Cheana Bentone Uke Gig Bag 13312 - Cheana Bentone Uke Gig Bag 13310 - Cheana Bentone Uke Gig Bag 5009 - Ozark Ukulele Benjo 14544 - RISA LD Tenor Ukulele Cheny Sunburst 12522 - Recording King RU988 Resonator Ukulele 12740 - ResoVille Weeki Wachee Resonator Ukulele 12740 - ResoVille Weeki Wachee Resonator Ukulele

0000 - Risa - 2 Models in Stock Now 0000 - Uluru - 4 Models in Stock Now 2376 - Yamaha GL.1 Guitalele

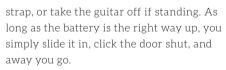
#### Acoustic Amplification



0000-AER - 14 Models in Stock Now
0000-Acus One - 11 Models in Stock Now
13905-Blackstar ID Core BEAM Bluetooth Amp
10496-Fender Acoustasonic 15 Acoustic Amp
8166-Fender Acoustasonic 15 Socustic Amp
9166-Fender Acoustasonic 150 Acoustic Combo
9166-Loudbox Affist
4548-Fishman Loudbox Mini-60W, 1x6.5°
5286-Fishman SA220-220w, 6x4"
9711-Laney LA12C Acoustic Amp Combo
13282-Markbass AC101 Acoustic Combo
6770-Marshal AS1000-50W, 2x8"
13966-Marshal AS500-50W, 2x8"
6771-Marshal AS500-50W, 2x8"
6771-Marshal AS500-50W, 2x8"
4572-Peavey Ecoustic E20-20W, 1x8"
4572-Peavey Ecoustic E20-20W, 1x8"
4573-Peavey Ecoustic E20-620W, 2x8"
0000-Rolend - 7 Models in Stock Now
14371-MOBILE AC Acoustic Chorus, Portable Amp
13018-Tanglewood T3 30W Acoustic Amplifier
8108-Tanglewood TXS Bass Sub
10837-Yamaha THRSAAcoustic Amp





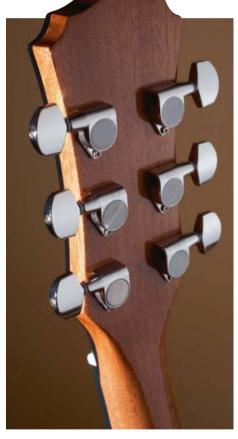


Sonically, the FA1A scores well. Though it doesn't have the depth or the growl of a larger-bodied instrument, the FA1A's folk body offers something for everyone as far as tone is concerned. First position chords are clear, pronounced and with plenty of body, while single-note runs and choppy riffs across the fingerboard have plenty of definition and presence. When you switch



over to fingerstyle, you unveil a bright, woody timbre that features a prominent mid-range. If given a real thrashing then this guitar's tonal limitations become evident - but, in truth, how often do you thrash your guitar?

Employing the onboard pickup system the FA1A performs equally well. The Fishman's controls do exactly what they're supposed to, and the uncomplicated control panel makes for easy mid-song tweaking. The amplified tone is a fairly accurate replication of the guitar's acoustic tone: bright, woody and



slightly mid-heavy - making it perfect for a band or live setting.

Freshman seem to have ticked every box with this package. Good looks, excellent build quality, versatile acoustic tone, and a more than capable pickup system - all for less than £300. The only thing missing is a case, which isn't included in the price.

In addition to being an excellent 'first upgrade' purchase, we'd suggest the FA1A would make a competent companion for open mic nights and those dabbling with basic home recording.





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# FURCH MILLENNIUM LINE 24

Sam Wise heads to Eastern Europe to see if this top-of-the-range Furch can put the Czech Republic firmly on the luthiery map

**WORDS:** SAM WISE **IMAGES:** RICHARD ECCLESTONE

will confess that prior to receiving this guitar I had not heard of Furch. A quick Google told me that they are based in the Czech Republic and they've been around since 1981. Back then, it was Czechoslovakia; private enterprise was treated with the utmost suspicion, and Frantisek Furch was operating under the radar out of a small garage. His reputation grew, and his instruments were sought after, but only after the Velvet Revolution of 1989, and the fall of the Iron Curtain, could he truly transform from a craftsman to a manufacturer. Furch still produces all its instruments from Brno in the Czech Republic, and across a wide price range too. The model here - at over £1,700 - sits towards the top of Furch's range and at a highly competitive price point.

The Line 24 is available in a range of body sizes, with this example a fairly small bodied instrument, in the Grand Concert mode, and handsomely appointed. The top is extremely fine grained spruce, very even across the soundboard, with lots of cross silking, and it's a lovely looking piece of wood. The back and sides are solid maple, with wonderfully rippled flaming right across the back. The rosette is padauk, left admirably simple but for a double wave inlay which is echoed elsewhere in the guitar. The top and back are bound with padauk too, with a second strip of padauk sandwiched between layers of white creating a luxurious look. The swooping, curvaceous bridge is ebony, with mother of pearl topped ebony pins, and a fully compensated Tusq saddle. The mahogany neck has 20 unusually slim (to my Americanised eyes) frets, and wears an ebony fingerboard with no dot markers, though the fearful traveller will be delighted to find them reliably etched on the fingerboard edge, with a double wave MOP

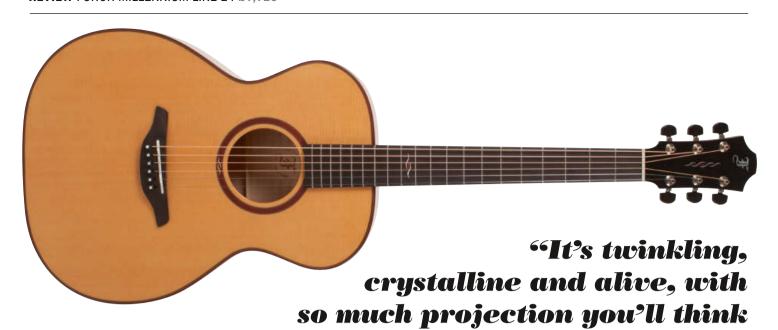


"It's loud,
but it doesn't
feel like it's
shouting
at you - more
singing
like an
operatic
baritone"

inlay with a padauk "eye" in the centre of it. It doesn't follow you round the room, but that's only because the guitar is so attractive that it's usually cuddled up with someone it just met. The nut is Tusq again, and the headstock wears Schaller sealed tuners with ebony buttons. The look is completed by a Gothic F logo, and interweaving spiralling mother of pearl whisps that echo the 12th fret inlay and the rosette. The arrival of the guitar in a Furch branded hard case was also a bonus.

Quality wise, the woods are first class, and the craftsmanship nothing less. There's not a thing to fault in the construction, the inlay, binding work or the fret dressing. It's five stars across the board – as it needs to be at this price point. Everything about this guitar exudes an aura of craftsmanship. It's a handsome beast too, and for us, would draw the eye from across the room, despite the relative lack of bling.

Not only is the body of the Line 24 relatively small, it's also quite slim, making the guitar extremely wieldy. The neck, while not Superstrat slim, is easy to grab (nothing too adventurous here, it's the modern C profile), so it's a very accommodating package all round. Now I will confess here that I am inclined to be sceptical about this wood combination. I'm a great lover of rich, full, complex tone, and, theoretically, this is the opposite. Sitka spruce and maple should be an extremely direct tone; tons of fundamental and not much harmonic complexity to complement it. While the Furch does deliver a variant on that tone, it demonstrates that equating that with "loud and boring" is a terrible mistake. The best description of the tone is muscular. You can do what you like with it and it will cooperate, but really dig in to big bass notes and power chords, and the size of the top



### FURCH MILLENNIUM LINE 24

NEED TO KNOW

Manufacturer: Furch Model: Millennium Line 24 RRP: £1,720

Body Size: OM
Made In: Czech Republic
Top: Solid Sitka spruce
Back and Sides: Flamed maple
Neck: Mahogany
Fingerboard: Ebony

Frets: 20 Tuners: Schaller Nut Width: 45mm Scale Length: 650mm Onboard Electrics: No

ACOUSTIC TEST RESULTS

Pros: Good looks and a knockout punchy tone
Cons: Not a thing that we could find
Overall: If punchy is what you're looking for, it's
fabulous

ACOUSTIC RATING

Sound Quality: OOOOC
Build Quality: OOOOC
Value for Money: OOOOC
5 Stars: Superb, almost faultless.
4 Stars: Excellent, hard to beat.
3 Stars: Good, covers all bases well.

2 or 1 Stars: Below average, poor.

CONTACT DETAILS:

**Sutherland Trading** www.sutherlandtrading.com



really does not stop this guitar from moving plenty of air. It's loud, but it doesn't feel like it's shouting at you – more singing like an operatic baritone, and you notice the ringing sustain, not the ringing in your ears. Picking it softly reveals a spruce and rosewood type tone. We've previously played examples of this wood combination that have had an almost laminate like two dimensionality, but nonesuch here. It's twinkling, crystalline and alive, with so much projection you'll think it's something bigger. The bass end is



it's something bigger"

tight and punchy, and really, that's where the glory is. We had a wonderful time tuning down to drop D and belting out big riffs. Really, there's nothing stylistically that this guitar can't do, but what we ended up loving it for (and love it we did) was the power, punch and sustain of the bass and midrange, which are remarkable in such a relatively small guitar.

This is a really, really nice guitar, with a style and voice of its own. You would only have to spec it with a pickup, and it would

# 5

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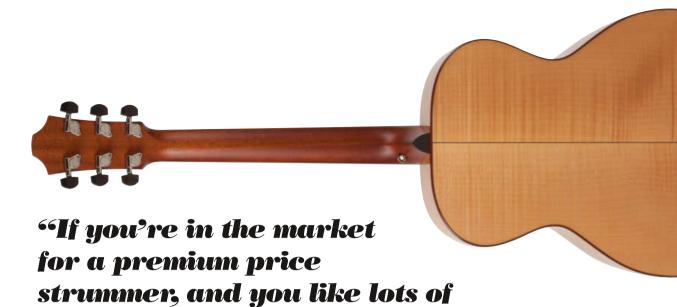














punch and focus, this is fabulous"





give the competing Martins and Taylors a genuine scare, and at a lower price. Furch clearly take pride in what they do, and aren't pushed into the mould of copyists at all.

If you're in the market for a premium price strummer, and you like lots of punch and focus, this is fabulous, and you should try one.





# PATRICK JAMES EGGLE KANIIGA CIISTOM

A custom edition Patrick James Eggle Kanuga with some chic appointments has Steve Harvey reaching for his credit card...

**WORDS: STEVE HARVEY IMAGES: RICHARD ECCLESTONE** 

atrick James Eggle returned to Blighty 10 years ago after a stint making flat-top acoustics in North Carolina's western mountains. The legacy of his stay in the US is not just found in his sumptuously appointed instruments that rival any major US brand, but in the names of US places his bestows his guitars with: Saluda, Linville, Etowah, Skyland and, the subject of this review, Kanuga.

Patrick famously built electric guitars in the UK before he relocated to the US (although he now produces a line of boutique electric guitars called the Macon - a city in Georgia - "I've got a map in my office of where we used to live and all the model names are on it. If I need a new model name, I just take a look at it and pick one out") and, as a result, has over 35 years' experience crafting some of the finest instruments adored at home and abroad.

Over those years, he has built a phenomenal reputation as one of the UK's most prolific guitar makers. He has continually redefined his extraordinary build standards - and secured some of the world's most notable players in the process. On that note, we have this month's review guitar: a Kanuga custom 'blackie' based on a model Jake Bugg ordered from Patrick last year. Named after a lake in North Carolina, the Kanuga is Patrick's take on the classic Gibson Slope Shoulder Advanced Jumbo - Gibson launched the latter in 1934 in response to Martin's 1931 Dreadnought (the first Martin dreads had 12-fret-to-body necks, as we have here on the Kanuga).

A standard edition Kanuga would see a cedar top with East Indian rosewood back and sides, while Jake's Kanuga 'blackie' has Honduran mahogany back and sides, with 40-year-old Alaskan Sitka spruce on the top, a vintage-style square bar non-adjustable



"This design allows maximum power with minimum playing effort'

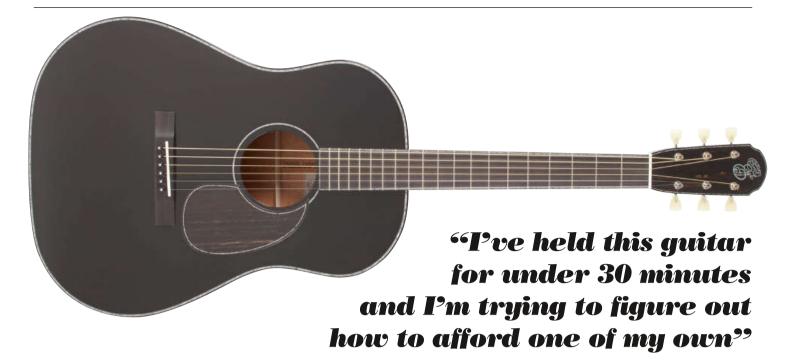
truss rod, arrow-jointed solid ebony headstock, nickel Waverley tuners (relicked) with an ebony pickguard, and fitted with an LR Baggs Anthem. This Kanuga differs in that it has an LR Baggs Element pickup, some awesomely retro waffleback Kluson tuners (which I'd go for over Waverleys any day having seen them here), and a regular

Sitka spruce top coupled with the Honduran mahogany back and sides.

By the very nature of small volume luthiers, they operate within a custom build environment where each instrument is essentially built to order and detailed specifications will, of course, generally vary from one guitar to the next. That's certainly the case here. While Patrick has a catalogue of guitar models, this Kanuga (which isn't a new addition to his range) has undergone some aesthetic tweaking to fit a brief - it's a fine example of what can be done when you can pick up the phone and talk to the guy building your dream guitar. This Kanuga, for example, has a 12-fret body join, but should you wish to indulge in higher-fretted frolics, you can order a 14-fret-to-body Kanuga. But you all know there's no money past the first five frets, right?

The 12-fret design places the soundhole closer to the waist of the guitar and locates the bridge at the widest part of the lower bout where it can most efficiently drive the top. This design allows maximum power with minimum playing effort while affording an open quality to the sound. As the bridge is shifted slightly, from a bracing perspective, the closer the X of an X-braced guitar is to the soundhole, the better an exploratory grope into the Kanuga's soundhole confirms just that. If you tip the guitar ever so slightly, you can also see the X of the brace straddling the soundhole.

While we're here, the expertly scalloped X bracing, tidy struts and kerfing are meticulously finished - which is just what you'd expect at this price point. The X braces are made from quarter-sawn European spruce, the individual braces scalloped on the bass side but not the treble side. This is to prevent the soundboard from overdriving when played hard - something



### **PATRICK JAMES EGGLE KANUGA**

NEED TO KNOW

Manufacturer: Patrick James Eggle
Model: Kanuga Custom
Retail Price: £3,750
Body Size: Dreadnought

Made In: UK

Top: Sitka spruce

**Back and Sides:** Honduran mahogany **Neck:** Honduran mahogany

Fingerboard: Ebony

**Frets: 19** 

Tuners: Kluson waffleback with pearloid buttons
Nut Width: 44.5mm

Scale Length: 632mm

Onboard Electronics: LR Baggs Element Strings Fitted: High quality USA-made Gig Bag/Case Included: Hiscox Liteflite Artist

ACOUSTIC TEST RESULTS

Pros: Stunning build from one of the greatest guitar makers out there.

Cons: Nothing to report; 12 frets may see some seek a 14-fret commission.

Overall: A stunning guitar with immense attention to detail and an incredible tonal package to boot.

The LR Baggs sees it stage-ready, and the chic appointments rank it highly for those looking for something a little different.

ACOUSTIC RATING

Sound Quality: OOOOO

Build Quality: OOOOO

Value for Money: OOOOO

5 Stars: Superb, almost faultless. 4 Stars: Excellent, hard to beat. 3 Stars: Good, covers all bases well.

2 or 1 Stars: Below average, poor.

CONTACT DETAILS:
Patrick James Eggle
www.eggle.co.uk



that's evidenced here, as the headroom with this Kanuga seems limitless. Usually with a shorter scale, you can't go heavy on the attack or the headroom will creep up on you - that's not the case here, though. Elsewhere, we have an ebony fretboard, bridge (square), pickguard and headplate. The headstock brandishes the PJE logo inlaid in pearl, while the whole thing (along with the fretboard, soundboard and, interestingly, the pickguard) is bound with reconstituted stone coachlining. The soundhole rosette also features this and, to me, it looks like an expensive piece of marble or granite tactically smashed up and delicately arranged, offering a stunning offset against the guitar's finish. This appointment reeks of understated class and is one of my favourite things about the guitar - it just



looks incredible. The grey marble colour of the binding and rosette set this guitar off perfectly.

The next upgrade is what sits atop the arrow-jointed headstock – the Kluson waffleback tuners with pearloid keystone buttons. I'll say it now: I'm sold. I've held this guitar for under 30 minutes (it's very light, by the way) and I'm trying to figure out how to afford a commission of my own. It's a luxurious addition that doesn't do anything a set of Waverly tuners wouldn't, but the cool factor just shot up to 12.

While cool factor alone may not sell a guitar, some tried and tested old school building methods will. One of those building methods that Patrick has brought to this guitar is the omission of an adjustable truss rod. Instead, there is a non-adjustable square



steel rod running down the centre of the neck. Patrick says he loves these despite the extra degree of care and attention that has to be paid to the neck construction and fret leveling – something which means we don't see this on too many other guitars as it's too time consuming and costly. The result is that less string energy is dissipated through the neck, which means an increase in volume. The shorter scale on this model means that the strings have a lower tension when tuned to pitch and this explains the warmer, more responsive tone we have.

This Kanuga also employs the use of hide glue - as in the golden era acoustics - which dries hard and increases the transference of sound between the integral parts of the instrument. The arrow-jointed headstock is a nice touch too, which you can see on a lot of Patrick's acoustics as an upgrade for £220. This is a strong joint where the volute actually forms the arrow head, which is slotted into a vee in the headstock. Tricky to do and certainly more expensive, but it just looks the part. The ebony fretboard is a plain affair (save for the binding), as it doesn't feature any of Patrick's falling leaf inlays we're used to seeing but, on this guitar, I think it might have tipped the appointments over the edge a tad - although, if you want them, just ask - and there are no position markers on the actual fretboard, just the dots on the top of the satin black C-shaped neck. The nut width is 44.5mm so there's plenty of space for fingerstylists here, yet not so much so that it's going to make your hands feel measly.

I realise there's an elephant in the room – I've not mentioned the finish. The polished black nitrocellulose finish was a request for



Jake's Kanuga that Patrick has carried on to this guitar. And without another word, I adore it. When I think of black acoustic guitars, Johnny Cash's Martin D-35 is the one I picture in my head. Well, it had better make room because this Eggle's moving in. Despite it being an absolute fiend to keep clean, the black finish marks this a guitar destined for a trendy songwriter-cum-picker – and this is where Jake comes in.

As a result of joining the neck to the body at the 12th fret rather than the 14th and moving the bridge farther back on the soundboard, the guitar's tone sounds wonderfully aged right out of the case.

The 'modern vintage' voice blends warmth and depth on the low end with sparkling clarity and articulation, and yields awesome overall volume.



One thing I look for in guitars is projection. A 12-fret body increases soundboard real estate and puts the soundhole and X-brace in a great place, much like that of a classical guitar. You don't see too many 14-fret classical guitars, and Patrick knows this better than most – he's built some exceptional classical guitars. This Kanuga really pumps air and projects like a monster when flat-picked.

The shorter neck on the 12-fret Kanuga means not only a shorter scale, but also a stiffer neck. In a nutshell, this means there's less of what Patrick calls "sympathetic vibrations" with the strings, meaning more energy is fed through the bridge, and that's what we're after. The volume and dynamic range is astounding – and you'd grow old waiting for the sustain to die out. The power



# "It's is a melting pot of retro chic appeal and aesthetics, yet employs a modern mindset and playability"

and fullness from the 12-fret join means flat-picking, chord chomping and fingerstyle are all ably catered for via a full bodied, rich and powerful bottom end.

An LR Baggs Active Element VTC undersaddle pickup sees this guitar stageready in the most 'plug in and play' fashion there is – literally, plug a cable into the jack plug/endpin mount and the unit switches on, meaning there's no fumbling for on/off controls. There are two control wheels neatly tucked away in the soundhole to amend the volume and tone (hence VTC). It's a minimalist's pickup that ably reproduces the natural sound of the guitar on a stage by mirroring the movement of the soundboard as you play.

James Dean Bradfield (Manic Street Preachers) said to me when he first picked up a PJE acoustic in a Manchester music store that it sounded like a "crystalline sonic waterfall – it was beautiful". I get it – this Kanuga has a sparkling, piano-like clarity across all tonal spectrums. James Bay also told me that the one luthier he coveted a guitar from the most was the venerable Pat.

Technical aspects aside, this review guitar has a flawless set-up with perfect action and immaculately polished and finished frets meaning that it's an absolute joy to play. The guitar has a quick response, even when played softly, and it has a great lower midrange and bass tonality. The bottom-end whoomph doesn't overpower the trebles, and I was positively awash with joy at how clear and balanced it is – the latter, I assume, being a result of the soundhole placement on a 12-fret-to-body instrument.

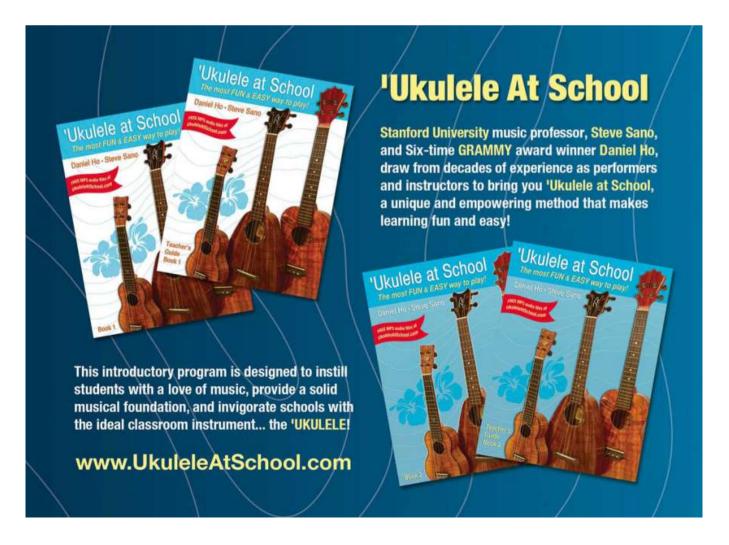
This Kanuga is a melting pot of retro chic appeal and aesthetics, yet employing a modern mindset and playability. You might think it's channeling a golden era Martin or, latterly, a Gibson, which the basic design does, but, really, that's a bit irrelevant. It's the innovative flourishes and meticulous attention to detail that make

this a Patrick James Eggle – the binding, the pickguard, the arrow-jointed headstock, and the waffleback tuners. It's a wonderfully thought-out guitar that melds a cool blend of tried and tested construction methods and stylish appointments and influences along the way.

A standard Kanuga would set you back £2,900, so there is an extra £850 of upgrades on this model. But, take a look: you've got the gorgeous Kluson wafflebacks, fretboard and body bound in the recon stone coachlining (with matching rosette), the arrow-jointed headstock offering enhanced structural stability, and the LR Baggs Element.

When you look at it this way, you're getting quite the bargain –and one that positively oozes quality and class. Perhaps the best review I can give this Kanuga is that as soon as I'm done writing this, I'm finding the cash to commission my own. It's that good.





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# THE 'WAR ERA' C.1943 GIBSON BANNER J-45

Tony Werneke of Replay Acoustics explores the history of this 'war era' c.1943 Gibson Banner J-45

### **IMAGES: RICHARD ECCLESTONE**

efore World War II, Gibson was known mostly for its brilliantly designed and decorated archtop guitars; hulking beauties that backed up jazz bands of the era. They also made some wonderful blues machines such as the L-00, the L1, and the L-2 with gold metalflake bindings and jester hat logos. Yep, they made some magnificent guitars in that era. But none of these would compare to the guitars they would make during the war.

Wartime economics dictated that
Gibson should be contributing to the war
effort – not making musical instruments.
They actually didn't acknowledge that they
were making instruments until well after
the war. Almost all their male staff were off
fighting for Uncle Sam, or building war-related
material. What was left was a skeleton crew of
experienced men... and a whole building full
of newly hired gals in the guitar department.
And make guitars they did.

The beginning of the war was also the beginning of two new models for Gibson, the J-45 and the Southerner Jumbo. This issue's feature looks at a Banner J-45 from this era. Stylistically not dissimilar to the older J-35 and the J-55, the new models introduced a slightly different bracing system and new structural features that would go on to form part of their

Due to a lack of resources, the one thing common to all war-era Banner Gibsons is their inconsistency.

The workforce was not averse to diving into the basement to find scraps of timber to complete a guitar, so learning about this period at Gibson is a lesson in variable expectations.

enduring reputation.

The Banner J-45 is built as lightly as physically possible, predominately with solid mahogany rims and back, and a red spruce (Adirondack) top and bracing. Mahogany or maple necks were used, as well as five-piece laminated necks, primarily made of maple. Mahogany tops can be found at times, but always we find Brazilian rosewood boards and bridges. Tops can be found in two-piece and four-piece construction with

variable binding combinations.

Importantly, as noted in a recent

publication by John Thomas entitled Kalamazoo Gals, war-era Banner
Gibsons were primarily built and finished by a female workforce with little experience. They caught on quickly, resulting – in my opinion – in the finest batch of guitars Gibson has ever built. There may be earlier individual guitars that equal the Banner reputation, but as an era nothing can beat a good old Gibson Banner guitar.

They made six banner models, four of which were flat-tops and, as the war ended, the Banner headstock logo disappeared into obscurity. But, as attested: "Only a Gibson is Good Enough".

This J-45 has a beautifully painted red spruce

top plank in a
ruddy, sunburst
hue. The rims
and back are
solid Honduran
mahogany as
is the neck,
which is

\*\*\*\*\*\*\*

one-piece. You can find them on rare occasions with maple rims and backs and multiple plyneck construction. This particular example has a truss rod, but many 'war' J-45s didn't because Gibson didn't want to be seen using steel uneconomically, given the war effort. Where steel rods were not used, Gibson filled the vacant run with a piece of maple. If you see a guitar with a flat triangular shape under

the black paint where the truss rod cover should be (like someone filled the truss rod cut-out and painted over it), it's a Gibson with a maple rod.

Internally, our example has forward-shifted, scalloped X-bracing, which is extremely light. A small maple bridge-plate secures the bridge from below. The bridge is rosewood with the typical pearl dot covered screw and nut, and the fingerboard is also rosewood. Tuners are open-back Klusons with peened-over shaft ends. The guitar boasts simple single-layer purfling at the body edges, and six layers at the soundhole. The neck is meaty, having a 1¾" nut and a very full D-shaped radius. Not quite what we call a 'baseball bat' neck, but close. This is partially why Banners sound so good;

the necks are always substantial and serve to transmit so much more sound vibration to the body than a lighter neck would. The pickguard is fauxtortoise and in a lovely, crackfree teardrop form.

From a sound perspective, I have never had a 'bad'
Banner. They can vary a lot but they are never disappointing. Their incredible volume is the first thing that hits you, just bags of it. Then you notice the back-tones and the residual









swell emanating from the soundhole. The whole guitar vibrates with deep, colourful sounds and a characterful palette. Its sustain is just right, dying back in a space of time that allows you to play on without dampening other than for effect. It has a bite when you want it and a clarity that is unusual with so much power. Press this guitar and it will give you all the headroom you would ever need, yet with the crisp character of a mahogany top. I've had singer/songwriters grow bags of songs from these venerable old boxes of wood and never have I known someone who didn't like them. They may have been overwhelmed by the neck size or the pure power they possess, but without exception they have been impressed by their character and presence, musically and visually. A sense of awe isn't overstated.

I had the privilege of buying a bruised and battered old Banner 45 from a picker friend of mine in Memphis who conveyed to me the story that it was found on top of a big old refrigerator in a closed up gas station in Oklahoma that hadn't been used since the 50s. It was grey with dust and dirt. It was rashed and scarred with splits. The bridge was coming off, tuners rusted in place. When I took it out of the case upon arrival my eyes lit up and my heart raced. Why? Because I know that the played ones are the best and sometimes the cracked ones are even better.

True to form this old gal didn't let me down. Once nursed back to health, she could sing with the angels and growl with the bears. She now tours the world with a wonderful friend Ben Holland, opening shows for the lovely Joan Armatrading. He has never sounded better.

For more information on the c.1943 Gibson Banner J-45 visit the Replay Acoustic website: www.replayacoustics.co.uk.



As Breedlove celebrates its 25th anniversary, Tom Bedell of Breedlove sets out a future-facing approach to sound development – as attention grabbing, he says, as the Flash Gordon-esque look the brand is famed for

### **WORDS: STEPHEN BENNETT**

he town of Bend may well sound humdrum on paper, but add on the next address line, 'Oregon', with its associated Pacific Northwest mountain splendour, and the romantic appeal increases tenfold.

Larry Breedlove and Steve Henderson certainly thought so when, in 1990, having honed their luthiery skills within the Taylor empire a few miles down the coast, they set up their own workshop in the old railway and mining outpost that, these days, is one of America's most desirable zip codes.

Twenty-five years on and the founders have passed on the Breedlove reins: first to Larry's brother, master-luthier Kim, and then to friend and fellow-luthier Tom Bedell (of the famed Nashville 'Two Old Hippies' enterprise, along with wife Molly.) The company now continues

to flourish as one of the most sought-after 'small-build' brands in the US and beyond. It's an ever-expanding operation; Tom now oversees not just the Breedlove line (including its unmistakably appointed mandolins) but also his own brand, Bedell Guitars and Montana mandolin-makers, Weber.

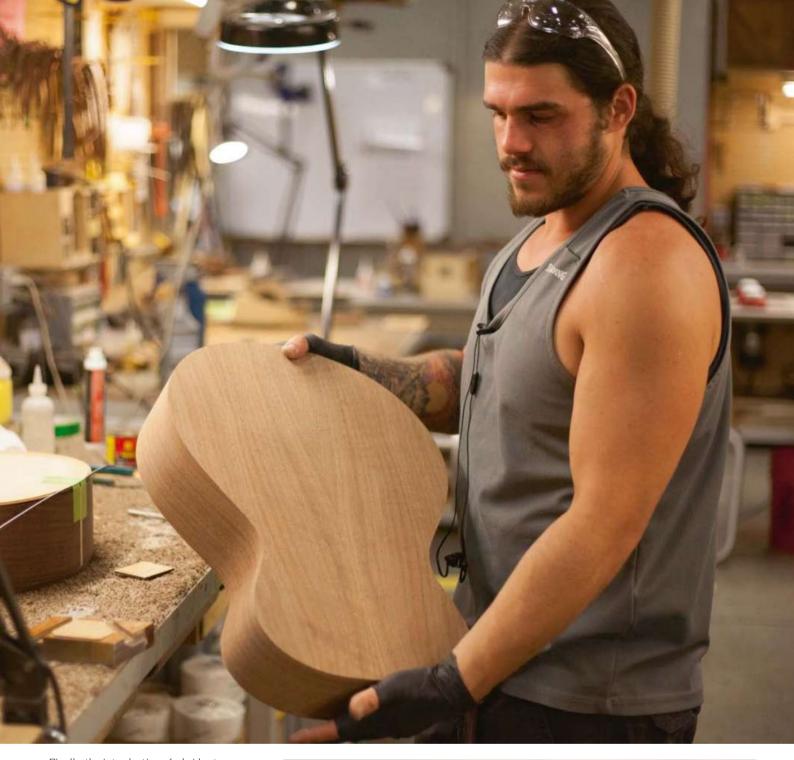
This being a big anniversary year for Breedlove, Tom's not just keen to tell the story so far, but also what the future holds for the brand and dispel a few myths along the way. Breedlove has been long famed for its distinctive, Flash Gordon-esque bridge and headstock design, but, perhaps unfairly, less is said about its obsessive focus on sound development. Tom's clearly on a mission to put that straight.

From the off, Breedlove wanted to be known for innovation, avoiding any attempt to replicate the signature sound and aesthetic of the 'big

boys'. Larry and Steve set out to completely rethink the building process and maximise the sound balance and performance potential of the steel-strung acoustic.

No half-measures were involved when they designed it; first, they altered the body-shape (check out their radically angular CM range), the neck profile (to a comfortable 1 and 3/4") and re-jigged the headstock - not on any spaceage-design whim but to align the strings for a more balanced tension between high and low, such that the two E strings both exert the same degree of 'pull' (with obvious implications for the stability of the neck).

Then, since a plucked treble note imparts more energy into the guitar's top, they decided to make the treble side thicker and the bass side thinner so that the wood-vibration response - and hence volume - would be as near to equal as possible.



Finally, the introduction of a bridge truss system took pressure off the bridge itself and freed more space for the top to vibrate, enhancing sustain and giving Breedlove acoustics a uniquely balanced and harmonically complex tonal quality particularly suited to finger-style players. This also allowed for a thinner top and imparted a note-separation clarity and warmth that, Tom says, has always given a Breedlove that bit extra.

Bedell reckons that there has always been enough demand for its opinion-dividing leftfield look. Most buyers at the Breedlove level, he says, have more than one guitar, anyway - why have two that look and sound the same? Fair point - and one that instantly dismisses any traditionalist-snobbery out of hand. Having said that, the current dreadnought and parlour models, across the whole price range, embrace a





more 'classical' aesthetic that Bedell feels is more appropriate to those particular body shapes. As neither styles feature the bridge-truss system anymore, the tonal quality is now more akin to the faster, more pick-friendly response that players generally expect from said body shapes.

Bedell sees the 25th anniversary models, though, as the high-watermark of the company's output. There are only 10 of the Kim Breedlove-designed, sinker-redwood and walnut specials based on the company's first Concert design (all already sold out) but the Brazilian rosewood Concert, in a limited edition of 50, has an intriguing story of its own. As so often pointed out in this age of tone-wood fetishism, it really is all about the build, but Tom's convinced this particular batch of backs and sides imparts a quality even he's never come across before.

The eco-conscious among us may now be scratching their heads over how the model's use of Brazilian rosewood, prohibited by the CITES treaty of 1992, abides with international law. It turns out the Breedlove wood-ferrets (all the best companies have them) sniffed out a stash of the much-coveted proto-guitar-material that had been hidden in a Madrid warehouse since the early '60s where it was intended for use in churches as doors, pews and carvings. Since all the global import/export paper-work had been cleared prior to the CITES agreement, that wood - rare serendipity, indeed - is now free to move around the world unfettered by legal restriction. Happily for Tom, guitars made with it will only increase in value as the stack left diminishes.

Nonetheless, he's equally proud of his company's commitment to the local woods of the great North West; the 25th anniversary models feature Alaskan sitka and the firm, throughout its history, have championed locally-grown



myrtlewood in particular. Bedell is surprised it isn't more widely used for backs and sides as, apart from its rosewood-like tonal qualities, it looks so spectacular. Growing hard by the Pacific Ocean, constantly battered by wind and water, it's the Willie Nelson of tone-woods; gnarled, tough as old boots but nonetheless, amazingly sweet-sounding. And as supplies of rainforest hardwoods decrease, Bedell believes the workshop's locally-sourced favourites will all have their day: myrtle, maple, Oregon walnut – even redwood (its inherent softness compensated by the company's trademark, bridge-truss, bracing system).

On the tone front, meanwhile, at a time when many players are looking back, chasing the sound, feel and appearance of the classic 30s and 40s acoustics, Breedlove is unapologetic about looking forward: they are all about serving 'the music of tomorrow, not the music of yesterday'.

While respectful of the current trend for torrefied soundboards, Bedell believes that it's his duty to build guitars for the future and let others recreate the glories of the past if they so wish.

The luthier has his own theory that new combinations of woods growing up with different 'life experiences' (mahogany in Honduras, Sitka in Alaska) need to be gently coaxed into living on together, almost literally, in harmony. As such, rather than bake out the top wood's cellulose fibres in an attempt to clone the sound of an 80 year-old instrument, he'd rather trust in the properties of the woods he's using to transform slowly over time, developing a voice that's unique to them rather than one in thrall to a bygone age. To put it more simply: "If you're looking for a 1930s sound, don't buy a Breedlove."

With an eye towards reaching players of all levels, Breedlove now has an Asian-built, budget range. Nothing US-made retails for less than \$1,000 but the Passport, Pursuit and Discovery models all now bring the company's design innovations to a more price-conscious customer without sacrificing any Oregon-level attention to detail. Bedell is happy to operate on two levels if, as he firmly believes, the quality of the budget line can expose and enhance the Breedlove reputation world-wide. Back at the other end of the scale, the company recently donated a lovely C20 model made from the precious Honduran mahogany planks of 'the Tree' to Oregon's 'Sisters Folk Festival'; just another example of the quality that convinces high-end buyers they're not trusting their hard-earned \$10,000-plus to any old strung-up-box-builder.

Just before Tom Bedell sets off to work (in the one-time mountain stronghold of Klondike Kate) he leaves us with a parting thought: "We want to go forward. We have no interest in looking back to the sound of an era that's past, wonderful though it may have been." They still like their straight talking out west. ■





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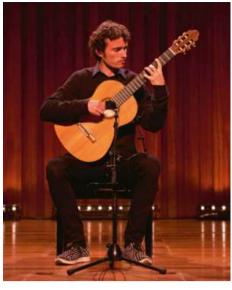


# **JAMIE LAWSON**

STYLE... (FOLK)

I consider my music to be folk, essentially – story-telling songs that mainly focus on communication and love. I live in Manchester, but I met Ed Sheeran at The Bedford in Balham, London, and he invited me to open for him on his UK and European tour. Ed's importance is immeasurable - he took a chance on my songs when he had no need to, and made me the first signing to his label, Gingerbread Man Records. I'm well chuffed with my debut album, Jamie Lawson. Considering it was recorded in only 12 days, I think it has come out amazingly well. The first track, 'Wasn't Expecting That', is the love story of a couple from the moment they meet to the moment they part. It's been hugely important to me - since it became an international hit single it's changed my life. I've just done a tour with One Direction, which on paper seems a weird pairing, but their audience has been amazing. My regular gigging guitar is my trusty big-bodied Taylor 410ce. I chose the cutaway because it allows me access to the higher frets. I capo quite high on a few songs, so a full dreadnought would make that awkward. It's a great guitar to just plug in and sound good on. I've also recently acquired a nice Martin OMC PA1 electro-acoustic with an EQ system that holds nine different mic preset simulations. It should allow me to get the fullest sound possible out of each venue I'm playing in. I learned guitar at primary, had lessons at lunchtimes, and then carried on from there. I play both pick and fingerstyle. I tried alternative tunings for a while, but mostly I just keep things simple and stay in standard tuning. I'm doing my first headline tour throughout Europe this autumn, playing Glasgow, Manchester and London on 2, 3 and 4 November. Then I head to the States for a promo run in December before joining Vance Joy on his US tour.

jamielawsonmusic.com



# **GERARD COUSINS**

STYLE... (FOLK INSTRUMENTAL)

I'm a classically trained guitarist from Wales, but now focus on writing my own solo guitar music, which includes a range of influences from folk to minimalism. I use Sibelius software to write - I think it's good to write away from the instrument as it frees you from ingrained finger patterns. My fourth album, The First Beat Is The Last Sound, is the first one that features just my own compositions and arrangements. If I had to pick a favourite track, I'd go for 'White Cloud Blue Sky', my tribute to John McLaughlin. My technique is classical, playing with fingernails on a nylon-strung guitar. I do use alternative tunings, but have to make sure it works in a live context; nylon strings always like to return to the tuning they were at for the last piece. I often tune the bottom E to D, and sometimes retune the G to F# or up to G#. I do one piece with the bottom E up a tone to F#, but always fear it's going to make the guitar explode. My regular instrument is a traditional Spanish guitar with a spruce top and Brazilian rosewood back and sides, made in Granada by Antonio Marin Montero. The best thing about it is its tone quality - the studio engineer was amazed at its range of overtones. I also have an MJS nylonstrung gypsy jazz-style guitar by French luthier Godefroy Maruejouls - a cutaway with 24 frets. I play through a Bose L1 compact amplifier, and if I'm not miked up I use a Schertler pickup and preamp. I try to keep my set-up simple, but sometimes I also use a Strymon BlueSky reverb pedal and a Boss loop station. I perform less in the winter and write more music, but I've got a few concerts coming up in Aston Tirrold and Brighton. I'm also excited to be finishing off some arrangements of music by Grammy award-winning composer Eric Whitacre for publication by Chester Music.

www.gerardcousins.com



# KATY CARR

# STYLE... (POP/ROCK/FOLK)

Based in London, I'm a British songwriter, musician and aviator, and I play keyboards, piano and ukulele with my group Katy Carr and the Aviators. I'm currently rediscovering my Polish roots, which I find utterly fascinating, and I enjoy telling untold stories from living history and the past. I love singing in Polish, and I'm very proud of my new album, Polonia. Polonia is the Latin name for Poland, and the album was inspired by a symphonic prelude of that name written by Edward Elgar for his friend, the Polish composer (and later prime minister) Ignacy Paderewski. I wanted to celebrate the friendship between Britain and Poland, and to pay tribute to the unknown Polish heroes and heroines who fought so bravely for our freedom during World War II. The main difference from my previous albums is that the drums, bass and keyboards were all recorded together - a new approach for me. I have to thank all my musicians, especially BJ Cole, Steve Beresford and Jez Coad, who made the mixes so exquisite. Steve was one of my teachers at university, and I was lucky to have such a wonderful music guide early in my development. I play the piano on Polonia, and I usually write my songs on my white Eavestaff Pianette Minipiano, but I also play vintage ukuleles and banjoleles. My collection includes a 1925 Gibson UB-1 ukulele/banjolele, two Ohana ukuleles in black and red, a 1915 Kamaka ukulele and two Mahalo ukuleles in red and green the red one is signed by Dame Vera Lynn. I'll be performing at the unveiling of the Wojtek Memorial in Edinburgh on 7 November. Polonia launches on 11 November at the Polish Hearth Club in London to mark National Independence Day in Poland and Remembrance Day in the UK. After that, I'll be touring the world, sharing my songs and their histories in co-operation with the National Institute of Remembrance in Poland.

www.katycarr.com

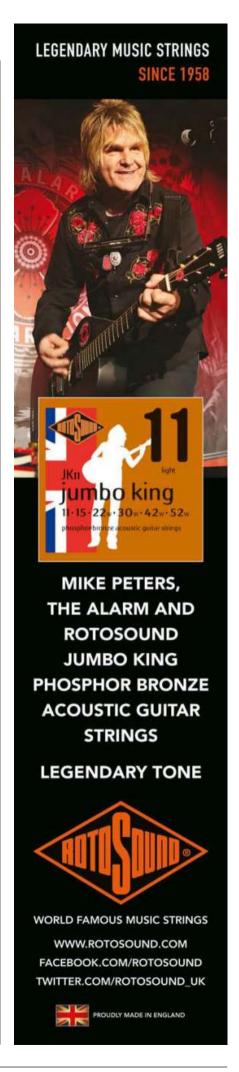


# ANDREW FOSTER

STYLE... (FOLK)

My songs are inspired by science, nature, the human condition and what it means to be alive. My recent EP Check Signal Aspect is a progression from my previous album Science and Magic in that I've created a piece of art specifically focused on my voice and the guitar. I wanted it to have a more earthy feel, covering the beauty of the countryside, naivety of youth and stories of life on the south coast of England, where I live. My favourite track is 'Spook Lane', because it has a foreboding message underneath a pretty melody. I enjoy that juxtaposition. Everything I do starts on acoustic guitar. I have an endorsement with Adam Black guitars, so I have many different instruments: an O5-CE 12-string, an S-8, and my first, an O-5CE. I'm currently playing an O6-CE orchestral cutaway with a Sitka spruce top and rosewood back and sides. It's fantastic for live gigs - it's tough, looks gorgeous, and the Fishman ClearWave60 pickup has great flexibility, so it sounds great. I play both pick and fingerstyle, as my songs draw from a wide variety of playing styles and genres. Lately I've been enjoying the connection between the fingers and the guitar, as I believe you can be so much more expressive with dynamics and bring out what the instrument is capable of. This doesn't mean I don't enjoy a huge strum on an open tuning, though. I'm very interested in chord voicings and the freedom in not knowing what you're playing. I use many alternate tunings, DADGAD being my favorite, and sometimes half a step down again to really get that low end going. I'm an effects junkie, and my pedal board at the moment consists of an Ibanez DE7 delay, Danelectro Cool Cat Tremolo, Ibanez PH7 Phaser, an Electro-Harmonix Superego drone/freeze pedal, and a simple tuner. I always just DI via PA. Future plans? Writing and recording, plus I have some UK dates scheduled for the winter.

www.andrewfostermusic.co.uk



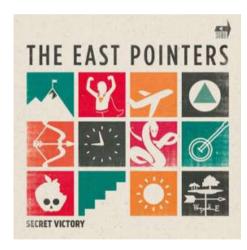




# **LAUREN HOUSLEY**

SWEET SURRENDER WWW.LAURENHOUSLEY.CO.UK

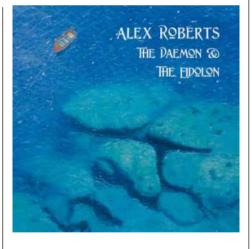
The ability to sing with soul is not - as many aspiring vocalists seem to imagine – a given for those gifted with a strong vocal range. So it's refreshing to come across Lauren Housley, no vocal histrionics - just one heck of a feel for everything she tackles. And pretty impressive it is. At times, as on the slow burn of 'The Waiting Game', she sounds uncannily like Gladys Knight; and the gorgeous 'Ghost Town Blues', with its unexpected time changes, sounds like a Tamla outtake from its glory days. Then, on the title track, a mid-tempo lope with mournful harmonica and whining pedal steel, Housley proves she can also do country with the best of them. A gem. JP



# THE EAST POINTERS

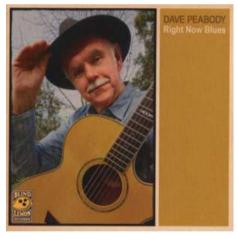
SECRET VICTORY WWW.EASTPOINTERS.CA

This young Celtic music-obsessed trio hail from Prince Edward Island on Canada's wind-whipped East coast, but you'd scarcely believe it. From the frenetic banjo arpeggios that open the title track, before Tim Chaisson's fire cracking fiddle pushes the tune into hyperspace, you could imagine that this was a session recorded in the early hours of Sunday morning at some Guinness drenched lock-in three thousand miles away. Things wind down a bit with 'Cold', a song of yearning and hard times, but the gloom is short lived and the guys are soon ripping it up again. There's nothing you haven't heard before, but the band's creativity shines. JP



# **ALEX ROBERTS** THE DAEMON & THE EIDOLON INFO@ALEXROBERTSMUSIC.COM

Folk trance? Well maybe. From the laidback, sparse beauty of 'Demon Lover', the track that begins this album, this Dorset-based singer recalls the finest hours of the late John Martyn and Bert Jansch in equal measure with his slurred vocals and gentle modal guitar work. That's a pretty good starting point. On 'Cold Blows the Wind', a doomy traditional epic lasting over six minutes, Alex proves he's no slouch on a Weissenborn guitar, before showing off his acoustic chops on the intriguing instrumental title track. Elsewhere he lays down the kind of intriguing songs that'll leave you wondering just where it all came from. One on his own for sure. JP



# DAVE PEABODY

RIGHT NOW BLUES WWW.DAVEPEABODY.COM

The blues have always been a hard road to follow: little money, very few 'big leg women' (despite all the songs) and too much bad whiskey. And no one knows all this better than Dave Peabody. A champion of the genre for almost half a century, this latest release finds him unrepentant, laying down a clutch of standards including a steamy take on Big Joe Williams' 'Highway 61' and the title track by Frank Stokes, all recorded in authentic fashion. To add spice to the proceedings he's enlisted German violinist Regina Mudrich and her playing provides an intriguing counterpoint to the good time feel. If there was any justice the man would be a national treasure. JP



# **ELEANOR MCEVOY** LOVE MUST BE TOUGH

WWW.ELEANORMCEVOY.COM

Hopefully Ms McEvoy won't mind me saying she's someone who's been around the block a few times, musically speaking. Since she wrote 'Only A Woman's Heart', the title track of 1992's A Woman's Heart, a compilation of songs by female artists that would go on to be the biggest selling CD in Irish history, McEvoy's artistic vision has known no limits. This time she's mining the darkest recesses of the female condition, and from her jazz take of the Stones' old chestnut 'Mother's Little Helper'. to Terry Allen's 'Lubbock Woman', and the Hokum classic 'Hands Off Him', Eleanor stomps on emotions where men fear to tread. Intriguing - and sometimes downright clever - songs. JP

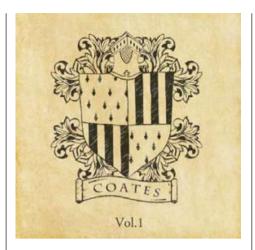


# IAN DUNLOP

THE ORACLE

WWW.IANDUNLOPMUSIC.MOONFRUIT.COM

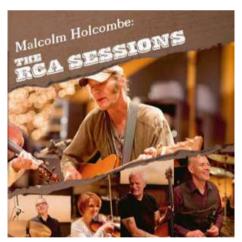
Once upon a time there was a band called The Flying Burrito Brothers. With Gram Parsons at their helm, and Ian Dunlop on bass guitar, these Californian desperados kick-started the very notion of country rock. But half a century on, as you'd expect, the nudie suits are long gone, and lan's zany take on the world now owes more to Frank Zappa than Buck Owens. Backed up by a gang of sympathetic musicians including his right hand man pianist John Bickersteth, lan is as opinionated as ever. Somehow it all hangs together, and is every bit as entertaining as you might expect from an old hand. JP



# **COATES**

WWW.COATESOFFICIAL.COM

Not to be confused with his chamber musician namesake, this Oliver Coates grew up in the Britpop era, and it's the Blur/Oasis legacy that stalks this batch of four songs on his debut EP. What follows is nothing less than an undiluted indie workout that should make his heroes smile. Brimming with energy, drawled Gallagher-esque vocals and chiming guitars, songs like 'Grin and Tonic', and the acerbic 'Talk Of The Town', with Oliver poking fun at today's celebrity-obsessed culture, suggest there's more going on here than a guy trying to recreate a bygone musical era. Watch this space. JP



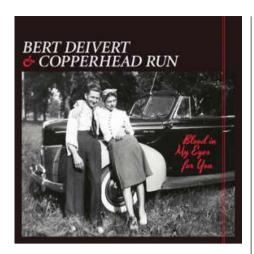
# MALCOLM HOLCOMBE

THE RCA SESSIONS

www.malcolmholcombe.com

If you've witnessed Malcolm Holcombe laying it down in some small bar or club, then you'll already know that hearing his sanctified, down home, gritty take on life, is the closest you'll come to a religious epiphany without going to church. So, if you've yet to hear him in person, this CD and DVD is damn near as fine an introduction as you're likely to get. Recorded in RCA's legendary Studio A in Nashville, with a gang of his long time collaborators, Malcolm works through a collection of his finest songs with just the kind of fire we've come to expect. 'Butcher In Town', 'To Drink The Rain', 'I Call The Shots'-they're all here. If you only buy one CD this month, make it this one. JP

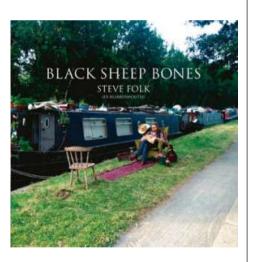




# **BERT DEIVERT &** COPPERHEAD RUN

BLOOD IN MY EYES FOR YOU WWW.DEIVERT.COM

When blues mandolinist Bert Deivert left the States and moved to Sweden in 1974 it was an inspired move; there are probably more die-hard Nordic blues fanatics than you'll find born in Mississippi. But if you're going to mess with this weighty material you have to know what you're doing. So does it come off? Well, as a live album it certainly bounces along, with his three Swedish accompanists laying it down just right. Sadly though, Bert's no Son House, and his vocal mannerisms aren't always convincing. However, if you're someone for whom the blues remains uncharted territory, then give it a shot. JP



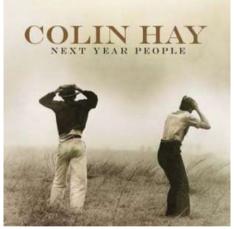
# STEVE FOLK **BLACK SHEEP BONES** WWW.STEVEFOLK.COM

Having played to audiences all over Europe over the last three years, Black Sheep Bones paints an insightful picture of the life of a touring musician and the endless journeys they embark upon. In addition to the easy-on-the-ear songstructure and vocals, Folk displays a talent for arranging; the opening track 'My Green Rollercoaster' is a good example. Fingerpicking fluidity builds steadily to an orchestra-backed finish. In the album's title track, Folk declares he has no plan, no pension scheme; just a 4 x 4 and a caravan. Yet the singer leaves you in no doubt that he's 'living the dream'. Clearly a man who lives and breathes every note he plays. SH



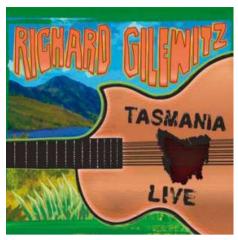
# **BEN ROGERS** THE BLOODRED YONDER WWW.BENROGERS.COM

With lines like "I washed my hands in the river and the river ran red", and a Wyatt Earp look, Ben Rogers sounds as though he could well be a Cormac McCarthy fan. In reality he's a Vancouver-based actor and singer with, on the evidence of this album, a hankering to be riding the range. Nevertheless, while weaving a sometimes tortuous path between the outlaw country sounds of Waylon Jennings, and the chiming guitars of Neil Young, he's come up with a clutch of great songs. Highlights include 'The River', featuring some standout slide guitar from Matt Kelly, and the rocking 'Panhandle', all fine vehicles for Rogers' whiskey soaked vocals. JP



# **COLIN HAY NEXT YEAR PEOPLE** WWW.COLINHAY.COM

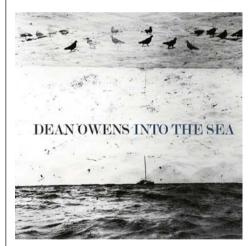
Former frontman of Australian band Men At Work, since their demise Colin Hay has relocated to LA and produced 11 solo albums; no mean feat. Here he's come up with a feast of radio friendly songs like 'If I Had Been A Better Man', featuring a thrumming Hammond organ and his gentle acoustic guitar arpeggios. A gloomy emotional quicksand haunts the album. Lost love, lost chances and recollections of 'dancing with ghosts from my home town' on 'Waiting in the Rain', queue up to in vain to tug bedsit heartstrings. It's all very harmless, very West Coast - but the type of album that makes you crave buzzsaw guitars and manic feedback. JP



# RICHARD GILEWITZ

WWW.RICHARDGILEWITZ.COM

Richard Gilewitz is a US-based, multi-genre virtuoso who's rubbed musical shoulders with John Fahev, Peter Long, Leo Kottke and Steve Gadd. Tasmania Live is a 22-track live album and shows off Gilewitz's immense picking skills and mastery of both six- and 12-string guitars. Standout tracks include 'Dirt To Dust'; a moving, mid-tempo piece featuring excellent slide work, which is somewhat darker than the rest of the album. A cover of 'When I'm 64' is a delight. Gilewitz's sense of humour shines through the recording as tracks are punctuated with anecdotes and stories. If Tommy Emmanuel and Doyle Dykes had a child, this is what he'd sound like. SH



# **DEAN OWENS** CLOSER TO HOME WWW.DEANOWENS.COM

If you haven't encountered Celtic Americana before, give an ear to Scots singer Dean Owens and all will be revealed. Recorded in Nashville with veteran locals like Will Kimbrough and Kim Richie on hand, this plays out pretty much as you'd expect. Twelve songs that span the romantic melancholia of 'Evergreen' and the introverted 'Kids', a song of "days of glory" in 1979. 'Valentines Day In New York' is a jog-along joyous yearning for lost love anchored by Dean's strummed acoustic, before the crew settle in for yet more tales of heartbreak. There are some great songs here, and as you'd expect the production is faultless. But you do wish Dean would cheer up. JP

# **Bass Guitar Magazine**



# BASSES YOUNDERSTONE STANDARD

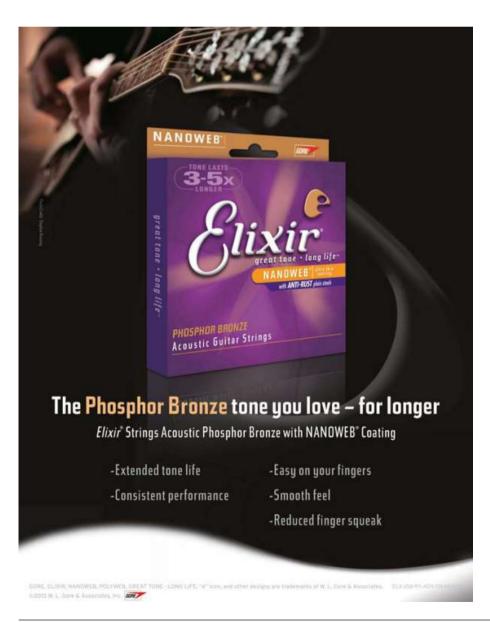


Bass Guitar Magazine Presents... Basses You Must Play! collates a ton of reviews of desirable bass guitars from the BGM archives as part of our magazine's ongoing mission to make you a better bass player. Whether it's an £11,000 Fodera you're after — and why not? — or a bass which you can snap up for a few hundred quid, this is your one-stop shop for all things bass-related, and the perfect companion for our first special edition, BGM Presents... The Ultimate Bass Guide, published last year. Oh, and we've thrown in reviews of cool amps and effects pedals too, just to round off the package. Bookended by a foreword and afterword from the great Stuart Hamm and Dave Swift, this publication will take you a long way towards your goal.

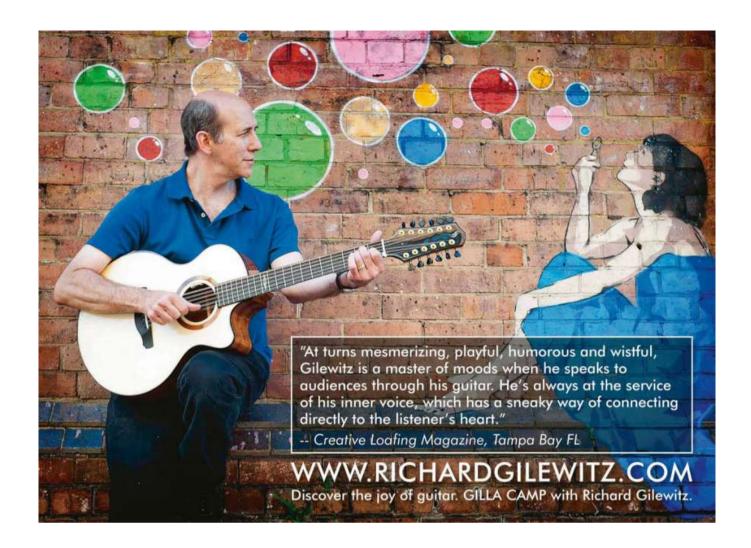
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THOMAS LEEB FINGERSTYLE VIRTUOSO

FULL TAB

# 'THE TRICKSTER (INTRO)'

Thomas takes us back to the intro of this tricky piece

# TECHNIQUES SKILL LEVEL: ADVANCED

ast year we took a good look at the final and main sections of 'Trickster', and since we're going backwards anyway we might as well wrap it up by dissecting the intro.

The tuning is C G Eb G G D and the rhythm is a 4/4 that is subdivided into 3+3+2. We've notated this in half-time for ease of navigation and reading, i.e. what I feel as half a bar in real life is written down here as 4/4.

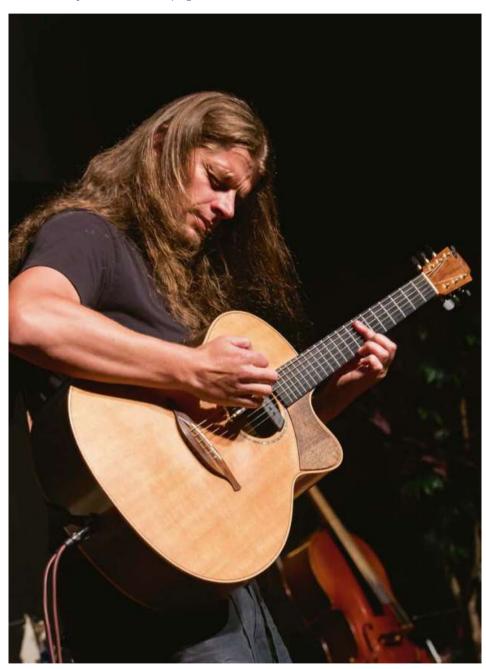
Before you dive into the rest of the tune, take extra care to make sure that you can loop bars two and three. The basic rhythm outlined here is integral to the entire piece so get it right or you'll be entering a world of confusion.

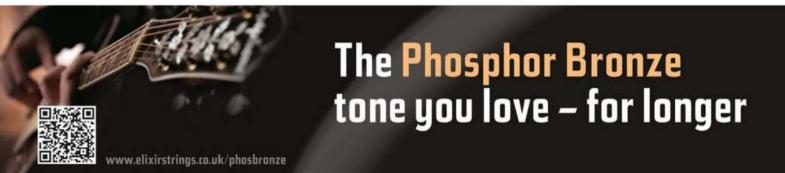
The percussion bits in order of appearance in bars two and three are slap harmonics (notated as T.H.), strings percussively muted with left-hand fingers (triple X across the three bass strings), right-hand heel bass thumps (X on the sixth string) and a right-hand finger tap on to the top of the guitar below the fretboard (X on second string).

As none of the elements that make up these two bars are rocket science, all I can say here is keep trying until it starts feeling natural.

We meet my little right-hand scratch friend in bar five: there's a right-hand tap (X on second string as discussed above) that I leave in place instead of lifting it back up. From this position, I curl my fingers inwards, resulting in my nails scratching the soundboard. I hope you have a scratch plate for this. A beer mat stuck to your guitar with painter's masking tape has proven a valid non-invasive alternative.

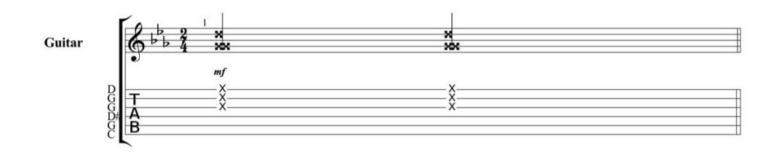
From bar seven onwards, we start substituting most of the left-hand muted notes with left-hand hammer-on chords,

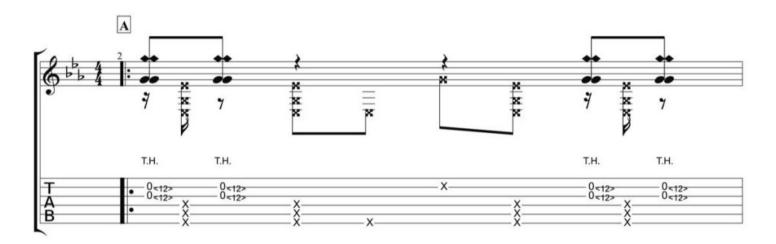


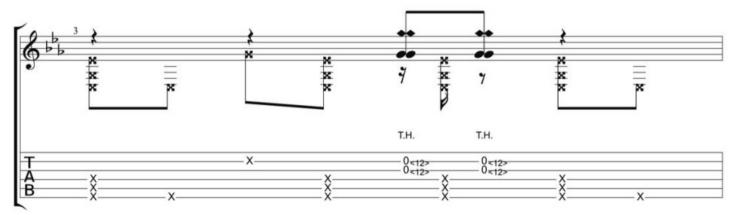


# 'TRICKSTER' - THOMAS LEEB

J = 144







filling in the blanks as it were. In bar eight, we fit a left-hand shoulder slap in between the bass thump and right-hand tap. Your left hand will have to move fairly rapidly there and back, so if you don't get this right away, it's because it's difficult.

The hammered-on chords move down into the bass register in bar 13. There's still almost no deviation from the initial rhythmic figure but that changes with a very odd, over-the-bar figure which starts at the last chord of bar 16 and ends at the last chord of bar 18. I honestly have no clue what to call this rhythmic figure. Unfortunately the only thing that springs to mind is 'large offbeat triplets'. See why I had to call this tune 'Trickster' now?

Thanks for playing, I hope this will give you some sparks for your own compositions!  $\blacksquare$ 

- -Extended tone life
- -Consistent performance
- -Easy on your fingers
- -Smooth feel
- -Reduced finger squeak





DANIEL HO GRAMMY WINNING UKULELE AND SLACK KEY GUITAR PLAYER

# SLACK KEY GUITAR

Discovering the G Kilauea tuning for guitar

# TECHNIQUES SKILL LEVEL: SUITABLE FOR ALL

or lovers of acoustic music and fine stringed folk instruments, the London Acoustic Show is like paradise. If you weren't able to make it this past September, ink it in your calendar for next year. You'll be glad you did! In addition to a performance, I had the opportunity to present a workshop on Hawaiian slack key guitar, and how I came upon the G Kilauea tuning. For those who couldn't attend, I thought I'd take this opportunity to share.

Slack key guitar is a traditional Hawaiian style of playing. In 1832, the first *vaqueros*,

cowboys from Mexico, arrived on the island of Hawai'i. They were invited by King Kamehameha III to teach Hawaiians how to manage their cattle. The *vaqueros* brought guitars with them and taught the *paniolo*, Hawaiian cowboys, how to play. The *paniolo* eventually developed their own unique tunings and music style known today as ki hoʻalu, or Hawaiian slack key guitar.

Slack key is played on regular guitars with certain strings slackened from standard tuning (E A D G B E). Tunings were created to allow guitarists to play in different keys, accommodate vocal ranges, and facilitate

distinctive musical phrases. Historically, slack key tunings were closely guarded family secrets. Due to its recent surge in popularity, information about slack key tunings is now readily available. There are hundreds of slack key tunings, but what emerged as the most recognised is the G Taro Patch tuning (D G D G B D). You might recognize this as an Open G tuning. What makes it slack key guitar are the signature musical phrases that give it that "Hawaiian" sound. The following example, played in the G Taro Patch tuning is one of the most frequently used turnarounds in Hawaiian slack key guitar music.

# **TURNAROUND**



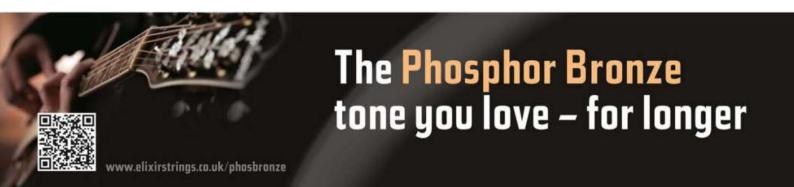
Over the years, I experimented with different tunings in search of more functionality and versatility. The result: the G Kilauea tuning, which is a hybrid of standard tuning and the G Taro Patch tuning. It combines the best of both worlds: the fullness of G Taro Patch and the flexibility of standard tuning. In Hawaiian music, it is classified as a Hoʻopaʻa tuning, where at least one string needs to be fretted by the left hand to make a chord.

Mathematically, the six strings of a guitar can be tuned to 2,985,984 combinations (each string has 12 different notes:  $12^6$  = 2,985,984), so retuning strings can be an exponentially confusing task without a set of guidelines. Here are six principles I use as parameters to help simplify the process of finding a tuning, I'll discuss the first two, and you can find explanation of the following four principles in my next *Acoustic* column. Each principle is

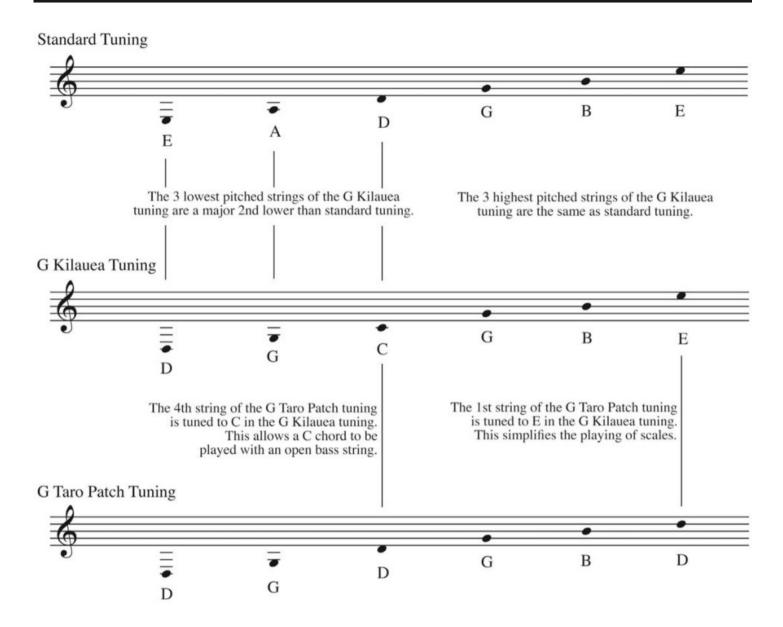
followed by explanations on how they were used to form the G Kilauea tuning.

# STRING TENSION

A guitar is designed to function best in standard tuning (E A D G B E). Changing the tension of the strings disrupts the delicate balance of the instrument. It affects the curvature of the neck and the action (height of the strings above the fretboard). Selecting



# **TUNINGS**



pitches too far from standard tuning can compromise the accuracy of the intonation, make the guitar difficult to play, or cause the strings to buzz. A minor third below or a major second above standard tuning seems to be an acceptable range on most guitars. Increasing a guitar's overall string tension will produce a brighter, more articulate sound. Reducing string tension makes a guitar sound fuller and warmer, and gives it a gentler attack.

The three highest pitched strings of the G Kilauea tuning: G, B, and E, remain in standard tuning. The three lowest pitched strings: D, G, and C, are tuned down a whole step, but still within a minor third of standard tuning. The result is a richer and deeper sound.

Slack key tunings are generally in major keys because they were created to play Hawaiian

music, which is almost always in major tonalities. If a song is in a minor key, consider designing a tuning to suit that key. For example, the G Taro Patch tuning is a G major chord (D G DGBD). By lowering the B to Bb, G Taro Patch becomes a G minor chord (D G D G Bb D).

Similar to standard tuning, the G Kilauea tuning functions well in both major and minor keys. This versatility has its advantages in live performance - no retuning! ■

- -Extended tone life
- -Consistent performance
- -Easy on your fingers
- -Smooth feel
- -Reduced finger squeak





# **CLIVE CARROLL** ACOUSTIC VIRTUOSO



ONLINE

Clive Carroll guides us down a Nick Drake-esque river in 'The Boatman'

# TECHNIQUES SKILL LEVEL: ADVANCED

hanks to those who requested this piece. 'The Boatman' is inspired by the music of Nick Drake - specifically 'River Man' from the album Five Leaves Left. It started out as a guitar piece with a string orchestra, and for the arrangement printed here I have incorporated some of the string parts to create a solo guitar version.

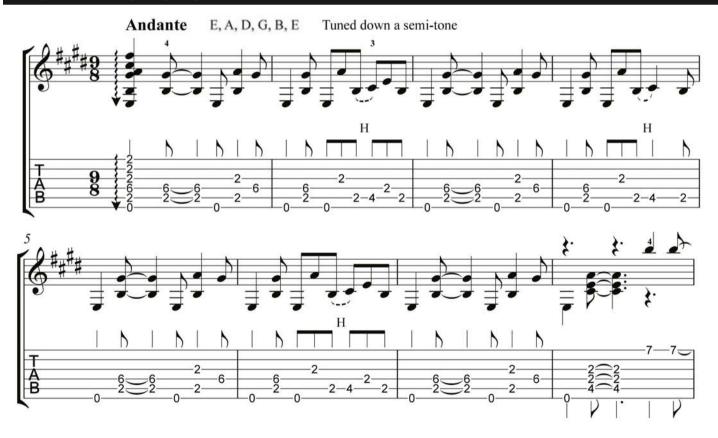
The tuning is in relative standard with all the strings lowered by a semitone.

'The Boatman' is in compound triple time - that is to say, a sense of three-in-a-bar is heard throughout. The opening pattern is syncopated with the thumb plucking strings five and six, the index finger playing string four and the middle plucking string three. A useful exercise would be to practise the picking pattern without the fretting hand to ensure a solid groove.

The fretting hand figure from bars one to right requires a barre across strings five, four and three, while finger four is held to sound the G#. Finger four lifts off when the third finger hammers on to the fifth string C#. It should all sound deceptively simple.

The melody begins on string one at the end of bar eight. From here to bar 11, the tune is fretted with finger four (with the addition of finger two for the hammer-on in bar nine) and the other fingers are added underneath to complete the chord shapes. The groove, melody and chord

### THE BOATMAN — ARR. CLIVE CARROLL







shapes are key here, and these factors are more important than playing the backing notation exactly as printed.

The verse runs through to bar 30, after which we hear the chorus tune played in octaves.

There are suggestions of the backing pattern but the rhythmic drive also comes from the tune.

At bar 41 the melody returns to a single line and dips, in pitch, to an E on string four at the end of bar 43. Remember to bring out this melody – which has been notated with upward stems – while maintaining a quieter backing.

Verse two begins at the end of bar 49. A couple of four-string chord additions appear in bars 58 and 59, and I like to play them *ponticello* and *tasto* respectively. A repeat of the chorus is played after bar 71 and from bar 73 we enter the bridge/development section. A tricky technical moment appears in bar 75, where the twelfth-fret harmonic B should continue to sustain throughout the following bar of F# major. Remember to use the very tip of finger four on the first-string G#. This applies also from bars 81 to 82.

Next up is a series of harmonic twists, which eventually lead to a repeat of the chorus from bar 93. You might like to experiment with some *rubato* to ensure that the harmonies breathe throughout these transitory modulations.

After the final chorus, the piece concludes with the intro figure. I tend to slow down quite a lot before strumming the final chord with the flesh part of the thumb. This creates a rich, warm sound, after which I gradually dampen all six strings by rolling the palm of the picking hand from the bridge, onto the strings.

- -Extended tone life
- -Consistent performance
- -Easy on your fingers
- -Smooth feel
- -Reduced finger squeak





# JD CROWE'



FULL TAB

Leon pays homage to one of the true masters of bluegrass banjo, JD Crowe

# TECHNIQUES SKILL LEVEL: SUITABLE FOR ALL

arlier this year one of the world's most influential bluegrass banjo players finally decided to hang up his picks and announce his retirement. In truth, this didn't actually come as much of a surprise to the bluegrass community as he'd already officially retired once before, back in 2012. On his first attempt he clearly wasn't quite ready, and as far as I can tell remained as busy and hungry for the music as he ever was. Now, at 77, and under strict instructions from his doctor, it would appear that this time he really means it. For this month's column I've decided to pay homage to one of the true masters of bluegrass banjo, JD Crowe.

Throughout history, musicians have usually had to do something original and distinctive to achieve any kind of lasting recognition, think Hendrix, Reinhardt, Scruggs, Coltrane and the like. JD Crowe is something of a rarity amongst music legends in that he was never really what you'd call an innovator or a trailblazer. One might even argue that Crowe achieved his legendary status the hard way, by simply being extraordinarily good at what he did.

For this reason his achievements and contributions are slightly more difficult to identify and appreciate. While anyone would be able to recognise Crowe as a good banjo player, it might take another banjo player, or at least a well informed enthusiast to appreciate just how good his playing really was.

Many of today's most celebrated bluegrass banjoists including Ron Block (Alison Krauss and Union Station), Béla Fleck, and Ron Stewart cite JD Crowe as one of their primary sources of inspiration. For the majority of his admirers it was principally his tone, precision and feel that set Crowe's playing apart, but one shouldn't forget all the clever twists and flourishes that also made his playing so extraordinary. His tasteful additions to the musical vocabulary set out by Earl Scruggs little more than a decade before him make his contributions to the world of bluegrass banjo invaluable. At a push one might even choose to describe Crowe's playing as inventive, albeit in the most subtle and understated way possible.

'Old Home Place' is a great little bluegrass song, written by the Dillards' bass and mandolin players Mitch Jayne and Dean Webb. Like most great bluegrass songs it sounds like it's been around forever. For most people it is the 1975 recording by JD Crowe's seminal band the New South that made the song the 'bluegrass standard' that it has become today. Crowe's opening solo to this recording is simplicity itself and is a masterclass in restraint, drive, technique and taste. At the very top is one of a handful of universally useful Scruggs style kick-offs. When you're working on any of these, never lose sight of the fact that a kick-off serves as a musical statement of intent for the rest of the song; Get it right and it'll emphatically project a sense of "Woo-hoo, here we go', get the phrasing wrong or a bit lacklustre and it'll sound more like Eeyore saying "Ah well, here we go again". Not an ideal way to start a lively bluegrass number.

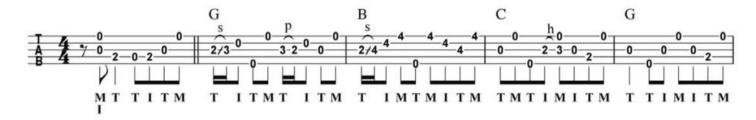
Next up, and only one bar into the song, is the 'money chord'. Bluegrass isn't known for its challenging chord sequences so when something takes one step off the well-beaten path of the I, IV, V chord sequence it tends

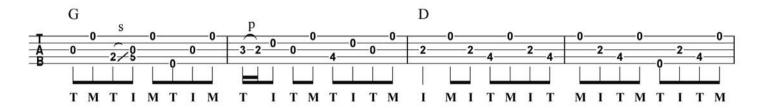
to get noticed. For bar two we have a slightly risqué III chord (B7) and it sounds great. Crowe's arrangement chooses to ignore the 7th in favour of a simple 2nd inversion B major triad. That might sound more complicated than it is; just hold your index finger across the top three strings at the fourth fret and you're done. The next bar moves to the IV chord (C), but again Crowe chooses to understate by playing what looks more like a standard Scruggs G lick, relying on the instrumentation behind him to state the C. If you break this phrase down and rationalise the notes in the context of C, it comes up more as a C9th chord, a nice extension to use here. The rest of the arrangement is equally well engineered and should be digested slowly, taking care to get everything sounding as strong and clean as possible.

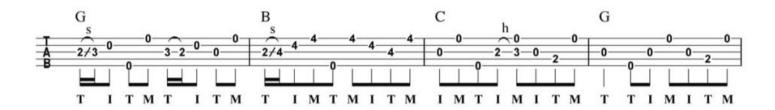
What Crowe played outside of the limelight has also become something of a talking point among his fans. He was absolutely fantastic at all the detailed, up the neck boogie-woogie influenced backup picking that is a huge part of Scruggs style banjo. This subject really deserves a whole column dedicated to it, but I'll whet your appetites with a simple trip around the sequence to 'Old Home Place', Crowe style. This approach relies heavily on closed position chords with no open strings. This is great news as it means that once you've learned something you can use it over any chord by simply moving it to the appropriate place on the fingerboard. There is also a fair amount of single-string playing and syncopation, so be sure to keep an eye closely on the tablature. It's also worth noting that as you travel further up the fingerboard, your banjo will start to sound harsher. This can be

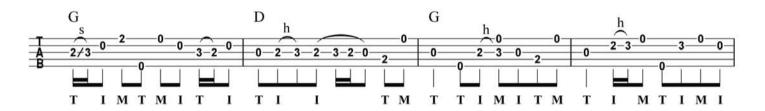


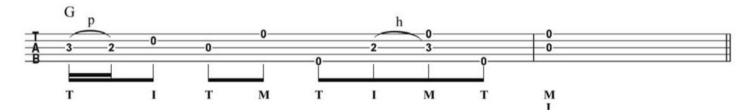
# 'OLD PLACE HOME' - ARR. LEON HUNT (KEY OF G)











overcome by moving your right hand further away from the bridge. This slightly sweeter sound is very much a part of the style.

Finally, one of the most effective ways of absorbing some of JD Crowe's greatness would be to listen to it as much as possible. If you don't currently have any of his records in your collection make a point of getting some, you won't be disappointed.

In my last column I talked about the creative freedom that can be enjoyed when rearranging or improvising over music that has a distinctive chord structure. While 'Old Home Place' could never be accused of being complex, it does unusually contain a III chord (B major) chord. In that respect alone, 'Old Home Place' qualifies as distinctive, especially by bluegrass standards. As such it could provide a great basis with which to experiment.

G/B7/C/G/G/G/D/D/ G/B7/C/G/G/D/G/G/

- -Extended tone life
- -Consistent performance
- -Easy on your fingers
- -Smooth feel
- -Reduced finger squeak





CHRIS WOODS CONTEMPORARY ACOUSTIC GROOVE PLAYER

# DON'T BE AFRAID OF THE DARK...

Encouraging experimentation in the realm of 'dark' chords

# TECHNIQUES SKILL LEVEL: SUITABLE FOR ALL

inding something new-sounding always seems almost impossible. To even get close to it, we need to accept that you can only ever be sure it's new to you. What we have listened to and what we have learnt is often what holds us back from new discoveries in music. If it doesn't sound familiar to us, the tendency is to lose our confidence and think it's wrong. Furthermore, if it doesn't conform to the fundamental harmony we know and love (a G-C-D chord progression, for example), it brings even more fear and doubt to our minds. Crucially, we need to be brave and confident in how we create chords and harmonies, and not be afraid of the new and unfamiliar.

This month I wanted to offer some inspiration on finding new sounds, and to give you some confidence when you're stumbling around in the dark trying to find that new chord. There is nothing I enjoy more than finding a 'dark-sounding' chord that seems different and otherworldly, and I think you're missing out if you're not pushing those boundaries and finding those crazy sounds yourself.

I'm going to use my tune 'Unhinge', which is by all accounts very 'dark', (you can listen online for free) as a stimulus. I'm going to show you how I created a sense of 'darkness' and hopefully offer you some inspiration through the four exercises (all with a drop B) on how to carve new paths in your music. Don't forget to check the accompanying video at www.youtube.com/chriswoodsgroove.

Before we get stuck into 'Unhinge', there is an important point to understand and take away with you, so listen in: even though that existing knowledge you have can be a hindrance, if you use it in an experimental way you can work it to your advantage and find new sounds. The way I created 'Unhinge' was by taking a familiar chord and adding a new unfamiliar note, as well as new scales that I wouldn't usually use to accompany that chord. This created a new and exciting harmony for me and resulted in creating that 'dark sound' I was looking for.

I think this process is a great system to use for any student trying to create something new: use your previous knowledge and deliberately manipulate it. Crucially it might not be familiar or even pleasant, but if it creates an atmosphere of some kind you are on the right track – believe in your ears. Put simply: take something old, and have the confidence to make something new.

### **EXAMPLE 1:**

This is the main theme from 'Unhinge'. The chord originated from a fairly standard A13 chord, but the addition of the drop B in the bass creates a really interesting sound. Pay close attention to the triplet riff consisting of: slap, up and down with your thumb. This is also done while palm muting to create a really percussive sound.

### **EXAMPLE 2:**

Play the main theme again but now add in this simple melodic octave melody. Palm mute the drop B to bring some percussion to the sound. Make sure you are confident with the octave shape before you pull it all together.

### **EXAMPLE 3:**

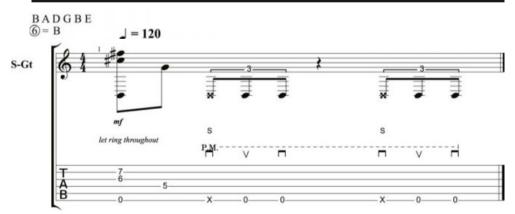
This example brings together two scales the B minor and the B Dorian (these are tabbed in **example 4**). Notice how the melody references both scales, which adds to that strange and uneasy sound.

### **EXAMPLE 4:**

Here I have tabbed both scales (B minor and B Dorian). Mixing scales is great way to create new and rich sounds. When working in a solo guitar context, you don't have to worry about clashes. If it fits with that ground note (drop B) you are in good company and can effortlessly shift across harmonic ideas.

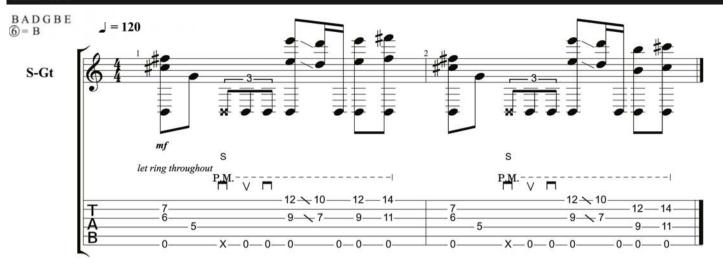
Get noodling and see what you create.







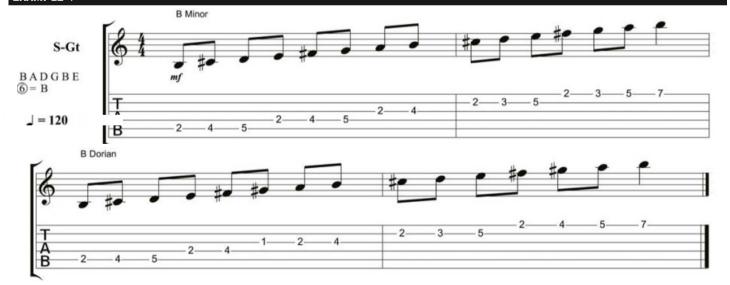




# **EXAMPLE** 3







- -Extended tone life
- -Consistent performance
- -Easy on your fingers
- -Smooth feel
- -Reduced finger squeak





PAUL BRETT VINTAGE GUITAR EXPERT AND 12-STRING AFICIONADO

# 12-STRING CORNER



Paul Brett introduces us to his neo-classical composition 'Crystalline'

# TECHNIQUES SKILL LEVEL: SUITABLE FOR ALL

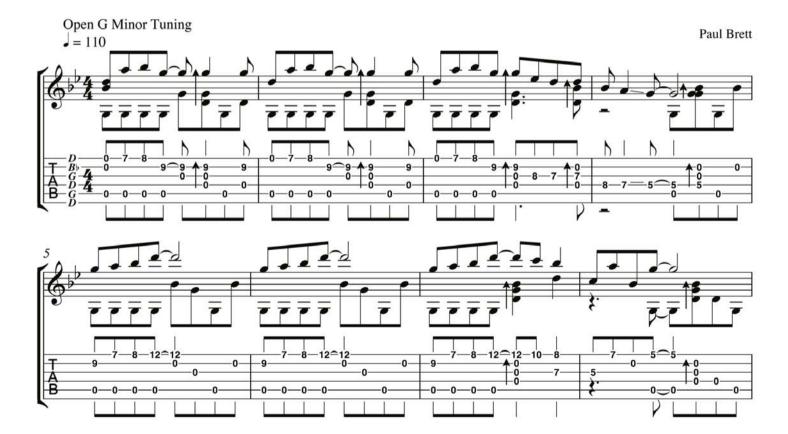
ne has to assume that the traditional roots of the 12-string guitar originated in Europe and morphed into its current form through the colonisation of the Americas by Europeans, probably the Spanish. It was most certainly developed from six-course guitars into the metal beast it is today. The history leans towards it coming across the border from Mexico into the USA in the late 19th century, and for a good few years it was treated as a novelty item by guitarists; it was

an alien instrument compared to the socially acceptable six-string.

The early music that was played on it was probably of Mexican origin. Lydia Mendoza (1916-2007), considered a legend in Tejano music, is one of the first names on the timeline of the 12-string guitar.

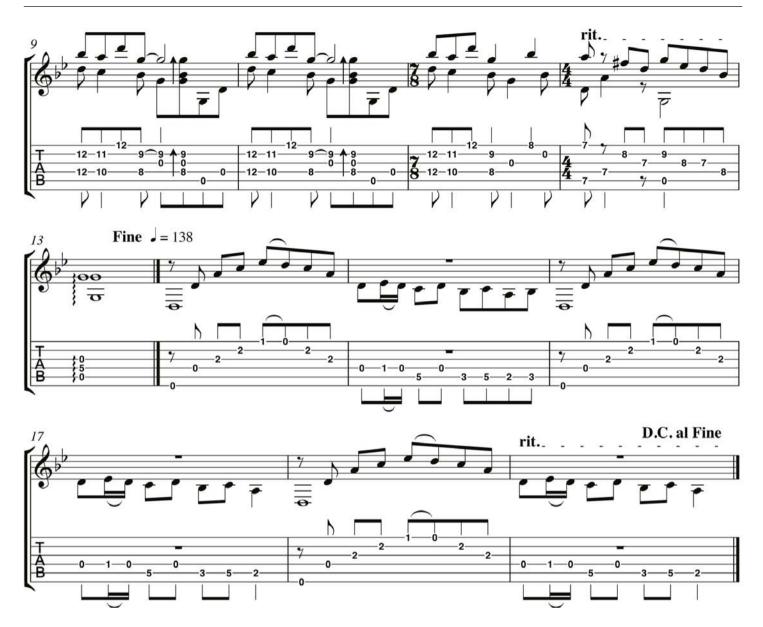
None of the early recognised guitar companies treated 12-strings as a serious instrument either, so not many were produced – certainly not in comparison to six-strings, banjos and ukes. Holzapfel Guitars

of Baltimore were one of the early makers, and they made some fine 12-strings. Later, the Oscar Schmidt Company of New Jersey started producing them. These instruments were picked up by some early blues players, including the now legendary Lead Belly and Blind Willie McTell. In this genre, 12-string guitars appeared to find their niche, as the blues opened itself to the instruments' sound. The technique for the instrument was more dependent on the right hand than the left, unlike its cousin, the six-string. The string pairs





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that were tuned in octaves had to be plucked as one, and this proved to be the sticking point for many six-string players who tried the 12-string. In fact, it's still the case today that many players lose patience, especially with finger picking, and thus opt to use a plectrum.

God knows why I caught the 12-string bug, as I was doing very well as a six-string electric player for many years. I was just smitten when I first heard John Joyce hammer out Blind Willie McTell's 'Statesboro Blues' way back in the 1960s at the Crown Folk Club in Twickenham. Having been in and out of many great bands – ones that usually split up – I got fed up, and I just wanted to find a

niche where I could grab a guitar and play a set without relying on others. I dabbled quite a lot on acoustic six-string but was never comfortable with the weight of sound I was getting, especially when singing, as I never really adapted to the quiet folk genre. Bear in mind that most folk clubs back then didn't have sound systems, and as primarily an electric guitarist, I felt a bit lonely without that familiar weight of sound.

Upon hearing the huge sound the 12-string made in John's hands, it convinced me that this was the route for me regardless of difficulty. I went on to learn basic techniques from John, and then developed my own

orchestral style that I still use today, alongside my love for blues tunes. It is true to say that there are not many classical style pieces played on or written for 12-string acoustic guitar. I'm not really sure why that is, as it can handle certain forms of neo-classical music in a unique and quite beautiful manner. I haven't written many pieces in the classical genre, but I have composed a couple of instrumentals, and in this issue I offer you a full tab of 'Crystalline' (with an mp3 available in the digital edition), which is a fluid and melodic piece in the classical style and will certainly be a good one to add to your set or even record as part of an album. Enjoy.

- -Extended tone life
- -Consistent performance
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MATT STEVENS INSTRUMENTAL COMPOSER

# IN THE LOOP

Exploring the sounds that can make you stand out from the crowd

# TECHNIQUES SKILL LEVEL: SUITABLE FOR ALL

he attractive thing about live looping is being able to instantly play a repeating loop and build up a multipart arrangement; this, sadly, is also its problem. You have to ensure your loops and arrangements are interesting and exciting enough to keep the attention of your audience. Repetition can soon become boring – especially if it's only a four- or eight-bar phrase. So, as a livelooping performer you are constantly looking to vary how you play chords and rhythms. Many contemporary songwriters, from Frank Black of the Pixies to Thom Yorke of Radiohead, start with an interesting chord progression first, then add a melody and lyrics.

Simple chord sequences like C, F, Am and G7 become a lot more interesting when you

substitute some of the chords. The original sequence can be thought of as a I, IV, VIm, V progression, all of which is diatonic to the key of C major. If we keep the C (I) and the F (IV) we can look at substituting the Am and G7. Replacing Am with an Ab major works well as an unusual but not-too-jarring alternative, and it's a chord not found in our parent key of C major. The G7 of our initial sequence gives a strong harmonic resolution to C, being a perfect cadence. However, this time let's change it to G minor, which gives a different resolution back to the I, but still works in context. Both of these chord substitutions are derived from the parallel key of C minor, with the Ab functioning as a bVI and the G minor as a Vm. This is a simple example of modal interchange, an

excellent device for introducing chords into a progression that aren't derived from the parent key, creating an interesting harmonic shift.

So now our chord progression is C, F, Ab and Gm – still harmonically satisfying but a little less conventional.

A slightly more unusual chord sequence can help you come up with interesting melodic material, simply by allowing your melodic line to follow the harmony. For instance, the song 'Wonderful' by the Beach Boys shows how an unconventional chord progression can inspire a remarkable melody. Our chord sequence might not be particularly unusual if you're into modern jazz or avant-garde rock, but in the context of contemporary pop, which is often based on diatonic major-key harmony, it's relatively unusual.

Now we have established our chord sequence we can look at other methods by which to make our chord progression as interesting as possible. Hit loop record on your loop pedal and record example 1. As this is the first loop that you'll be building your entire piece around, you need to ensure it's perfectly in time. It can take a while to develop the required coordination to play loops completely accurately. Practise with a metronome and soon it'll become easier. Getting your feet to work perfectly in time when tapping the pedals takes a while: try tapping your foot along to rhythms as often as possible to get a feel for this.

Notice the hammer-ons from the open to fretted notes when playing the C and F arpeggios. These hammer-ons from an open string add a passing second to both the C and F chord. It's a simple technique that can liven up chord sequences. Common in both folk and country guitar playing, the use of hammer-ons within

# **EXAMPLE** 1

Standard tuning

J = 130



# **EXAMPLE** 2

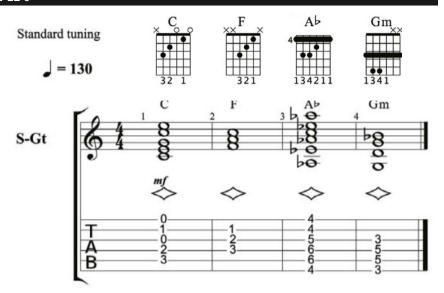
J = 130



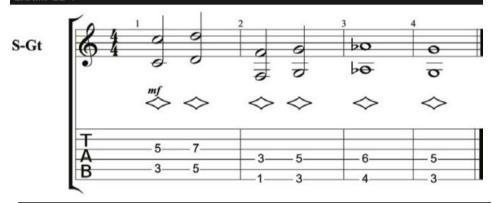




# **EXAMPLE** 3



# **EXAMPLE** 4



# **EXAMPLE** 5



open chord shapes can also be found in the playing of contemporary/alternative players, such as Johnny Marr of the Smiths. The F chord can either be played by fingering the notes individually, with the fourth finger being used for the hammer-on, or by wrapping your thumb over the top of the neck to play the F bass note. Playing with your thumb on the fretboard is

not the most conventional way of playing barre chords, but here it allows you to play something that could otherwise prove challenging, a method that was favoured by Jimi Hendrix.

Now we have our initial loop, let's hit the loop overdub button on our pedal and record example 2 over the top of example 1. Example 2 features more arpeggios of the same chords at different

positions across the neck as a variation on our original arpeggios.

**Example 3** features some volume pedal swells. This effect is achieved with a volume pedal in line before your loop pedal. You play the chord with the volume rolled back on the pedal and gradually fade it in to create a sound similar to orchestral strings. Ordinarily, this might be considered quite unusual for an acoustic guitar, but this technique was used to great effect by John Martyn, as far back as the mid-70s. Hit loop record and fade in the chords as shown in example 3 over our existing loop. If they are too quiet when you first add them you can always overdub them twice.

In **example 4** we add some more volume pedal swells. This time it's more of a bass part, in octaves. If you have an octave pedal you can activate it here to create a bass guitar type sound, thickening out the lower end. As well as the root notes, the bass line for the first two chords contains passing seconds, to make the line more melodically satisfying. If you like this sound you can keep adding these volume pedal swells to create intricate string quartet-style loop arrangements. Experiment with a few ideas to get a feel for it.

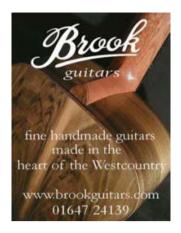
**Example 5** is a second chord sequence that can be played as a variation of our original progression. If you switch off your loop pedal and then play **example 5** it'll create a nice variation that can lead back into our original loop that we've been building. You can see this as a bridge or chorus. In the fourth bar, the G7 chord is treated as a first inversion (third in the bass) for two beats, then changes to a G/F voicing (G major triad over an F bass note) for the rest of the bar. This helps create harmonic interest at the end of the progression. You could also try playing this part more quietly, to create dynamic contrast, which will mean that when your main loop kicks back in, things will really lift up a gear. If you are playing the main section with a pick you could play this part with fingers or vice versa anything to give more variation to your song.

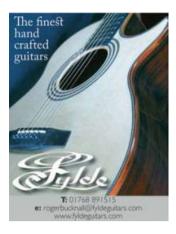
From here you can structure things however you want, but you may want to keep your loop simple, switch off the loop, play the variation chord progression from example 5 and then drop the loop back in and start to add the overdubs from **examples 2-4**. If you build up the layers through each verse of your song it will sound more effective as you build to a climax.

- -Extended tone life
- -Consistent performance
- -Easy on your fingers
- -Smooth feel
- -Reduced finger squeak



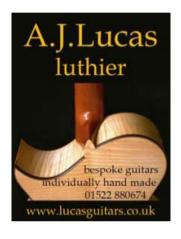
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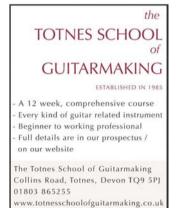




















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# L E G E N D S PACODE LUCÍA

**WORDS:** TERI SACCONE **IMAGE**: CORNEL PUTAN

ne of the giant guitar figures of the 20th century, and certainly one of the most revered flamenco players ever, Paco De Lucía galvanised his position as a leading flamenco artist during the 1960s and '70s on the stages of the world, where his myriad talents burned brightly for several decades. He helped elevate perceptions of flamenco – ] once dismissed as gypsy folk music in Spain – to a position where it would eventually become a global phenomenon.

Born Francisco Sanchez Gomez in 1947 in the southern city of Algeciras, in Spain's Cadiz province, De Lucía was part of a supremely musical family who all played flamenco. Son of guitarist Antonio Sanchez, and brother of guitarist Ramón de Algeciras and singer Pepe De Lucía, he grew up immersed in the emotive gypsy sounds of Andalucia.

De Lucía trained with his father and brothers from the age of five – that was the extent of his musical tuition. His father urged him to practice for up to ten hours a day, and the young boy eagerly did so. His father, brother Ramon and flamenco master Nino Ricardo were De Lucía's main influences as a youngster.

Mastering the guitar by his 11th birthday, De Lucía made his first public performance on Radio Algeciras in 1958. A year after his first public performance, he received a special award and was hailed as a child prodigy. In 1961, aged 14, he recorded his first album, Los Chiquitos de Algeciras, with his brother Pepe. Aged 16, he was recruited to join the flamenco troupe led by renowned dancer José Greco, with whom he stayed for three years, travelling extensively. It was during that time, while touring the USA, that he met Sabicas, the venerated flamenco guitarist who advised



the young De Lucía to cultivate his own style of playing rather than mimic others – a pivotal moment in his musical evolution.

Although he remained tied to traditional flamenco on his first two solo albums, De Lucía eventually branched out and found his own style. It was with the release of *La Fabulosa Guitarra de Paco De Lucía* in 1967 that De Lucía began to distance himself from the influence of master flamenco guitarists such as Ricardo and Mario Escudero. With the release of *Fantasia Flamenca* two years later, his style was further refined. It was through his musical partnership with famed singer Camarón de la Isla that De Lucía popularised flamenco music in the 1960s. The duo released 10 records: classic flamenco style with a dash of rock and pop.

Known for fast and fluent *picados* (fingerstyle runs) and *rasgueados* (flamenco strumming), De Lucía had a flair for the dramatic and bold; his career was as varied as it was long. He was lauded as a highly technical player, too. "You must have enough technical dominion to forget about it," he said in an interview on the topic. "That is when you can begin to express yourself."

In 1970, De Lucía made his Carnegie Hall debut. In the decade that followed he pushed

the flamenco genre further through collaborations with diverse musicians such as jazz guitarist and pianist Chick Corea, with whom he toured, and forming what was dubbed the Guitar Trio with jazz guitarists John McLaughlin and Al Di Meola, the apex of which was the album Friday Night in San Francisco. The Guitar Trio reached dizzying heights of virtuosity with each new release – until in 1983 they decided they could go no further, only reuniting again for an album in 1996, after 13 years apart.

Throughout the years, De Lucía spread his wings stylistically in many directions. However, De Lucía did not completely abandon traditional flamenco guitar. His 1980 album, *Interpreta a Manuel de Falla*, paid respect to the classical composer and flamenco enthusiast De Falla, while his 1987 album, *Siroco*, was a return to traditional flamenco. Throughout the late 1980s and into the 1990s, De Lucía toured throughout the world almost relentlessly.

In 2004 De Lucía returned to North America for an extensive tour of the United States and Canada with famed flamenco singer La Tana. Exhaustion from the tour would lead De Lucía to retire from touring in the mid-2000s, and from then on he only appeared in Europe at festivals. A private person, little enamoured of fame, De Lucía made the most of his newly cleared schedule to spend time with his family at his homes in Spain and Mexico.

De Lucía died unexpectedly of a heart attack in 2014 at his family holiday home in Mexico. He was 66. Retrospectively, although lauded for his highly technical skills, De Lucía was equally known as an extremely emotive player. Those two impossibly rich talents elevated Paco to superstar status the world over. His genius is still missed to this day.





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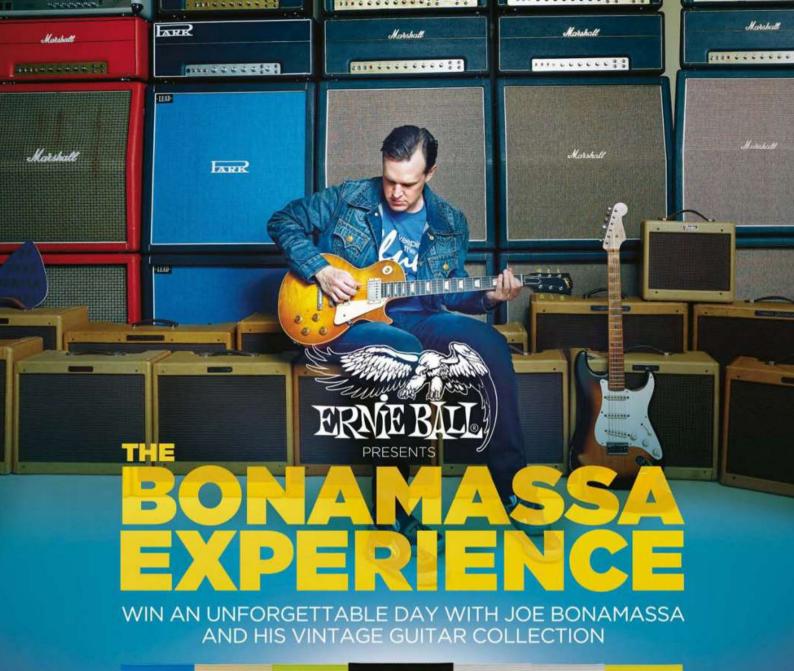
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